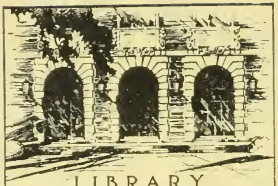

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A

WINTER IN LONDON;

OR,

SKETCHES OF FASHION:

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

T. S. SURR.

..... "Truths like these
Will none offend, whom 'tis a praise to please."

YOUNG.

VOL. II.

London:

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A

WINTER IN LONDON.

CHAPTER I.

AN EXPRESS.

EDWARD MONTAGU was the general favourite at Roseville Park:—his manners, his accomplishments, and his disposition won the admiration of the whole circle, and excited in almost every heart a partiality for their possessor. Yet, as among the number, one heart felt a warmer glow of admiration, and a stronger partiality than the rest; so, one there was which envy had so steeped in her rank poison, that it repelled all overtures of kindness and regard, and was susceptible

alone of a malign and ruthless enmity against this hated object of others' praise and love.

Lady Emily, in her open and warm expressions of thanks to the preserver of her life, betrayed nothing more than that most noble feeling of human nature—gratitude: but when, as day after day unfolded to her observation some new trait of nobleness of heart, or brought to view some new beauty of an elegant mind in this graceful youth,—she, who at first had been so prodigal of thanks and praise, closed with reserve her lips, and grew cautious in the very expression of her eyes, at those proofs of excellence and worth which made others clamorous in their applause,—then was it that the penetration of a judicious and excellent mother discovered the important change in the heart of her daughter, and felt the conviction that gratitude was growing into love.

The countess trembled at this discovery: yet scarcely greater was the pain of her

benignant mind on this account, than on that which was the effect of a very opposite cause; since, to her discerning eye, the increasing hatred of her son towards Edward was as visible as her daughter's love.

To act judiciously and benevolently under the influence of such circumstances as these, was no mean trial of her heart and understanding. Had lady Roseville been blessed with a friend and counsellor in a husband, her task would have been greatly lightened by acting in concert with his views and wishes; but, unfortunately, the earl was not that friend. He willed, and she obeyed; and though the understanding of the wife was as much superior to that of the husband, as the benevolence of her heart was opposite to the selfishness of his, yet pride, his predominant failing, so blinded the dupe, that he disdained all counsel; nay, so strangely infatuated was his mind, that, did lady Roseville propose perchance

the very measures which he had previously resolved to pursue, he invariably took an opposite course, from the mere instinct of perverseness.

To have hinted therefore to this lord and master her opinion, would have been merely to challenge his contempt.—To unfold her apprehensions to lady Emily herself, and to warn her of the danger of her situation, she felt would be attended with this hazard,—that it might open to her mind a possibility, which at present the great disparity between the rank and fortune of Edward and herself made appear impossible; and it would also carry with it a tacit avowal that the intended union with the marquis of Arberry was as yet not indissoluble. Yet, not to check the growth of her mind's disease, she felt was criminal. What though the powerful passion was but in its birth, she knew the nature of that passion, and the constitution of the human heart, too well to hope

for its decay, while daily nourished by the presence of its object: and she already saw and dreaded, in perspective, the fatal effects of its indulgence. These apprehensions were not awakened by any doubts of the propriety of her daughter's future conduct, whose established principles forbade such fears; but they were the offspring of her own experience, which taught her, that silent sorrow and untold regrets would be the portion of her life, however much the force of virtue might combat and resist the impressions of the heart, if, with a rooted preference for one object, she approached the altar with another.

While these thoughts and feelings induced in the mind of the countess a strong wish for the immediate removal of Edward, her benevolence was hourly shocked at the means by which lord Barton evidently discovered the very same desire. His spleen at the intrusion of this "Nobody" into the

very bosom of his family, he could not with all his cunning hide; though he aimed with no common pains to disguise it from the earl.

Lord Barton saw that Edward was the reigning favourite, the present pet of his father; and he well knew, that to thwart his humour, or to appear to disapprove his conduct, would tend to make him redouble his favours upon the object of his envy. He therefore pretended to approve of his father's magnificent designs for Edward, and trusted to the known fickleness of his lordship's mind, that some new rival would soon supersede the present subject of his ostentation.

It happened, however, that the removal which both mother and son so anxiously desired, though from such different motives, thus suddenly took place:—The Roseville family and their guests were one morning assembled in the breakfast-room, when a splendid equipage whirled by the win-

dow, and in a few minutes captain Neville was announced. Edward instantly recollected the voluble gentleman whom he had encountered at Beauchamp Abbey. The captain, with his everlasting smile, was ogling and bowing to every body in the room, and addressing himself in the same breath to lord Roseville, lord Barton, the duke of Delaware, the marquis of Arberry, and all the ladies, without listening to the inquiries which were made as to the cause of his unexpected appearance; when, suddenly perceiving the reflected figure of Edward in a mirror, he turned quickly round, and elevating his eye-glass, started back a pace or two, and then, standing on tiptoe, exclaimed—

"I beg a million pardons for being surprised; but you must expect to be universally stared at, my dear fellow. It's the common penalty inflicted on every hero of a Tale of Wonder!"

"You most incorrigible of all *Eccentrics*,"

said the marquis; "if it will not absolutely occasion the loss of your reputation, for once be serious, and tell us what mighty errand of Mars or Venus brings you to this part of the world so unexpectedly."

"My dear marquis, don't be uneasy—I see you wish to change the subject—but, upon my honour, you have nothing to fear from me."

"What is the drift of this nonsense, Neville?" said lord Roseville fretfully, "I'm sure Mr. Montagu and you must be perfect strangers to each other."

"You 're out, my lord—you 're out," replied the captain, seating himself with easy assurance at the breakfast-table, and taking up the tea which had been handed to lady Selina, whose timidity prevented her from noticing what she deemed a mistake.

"Why, Neville," said lord Barton, "you have taken lady Selina's tea."

"Pray don't mention it," said the captain with perfect nonchalance, "it's of no

sort of consequence. But, as I was remarking about this Mr. *Montthingummee* and the tale of wonder——"

"What tale?—what is the meaning of this?" said lord Roseville.——"Pray, Mr. Montagu, are captain Neville and you acquainted?"

"I have had the honour of seeing captain Neville once before, my lord," said Edward; "I happened to be at the Abbey when the captain——"

"No prosing, my good sir," interrupted Neville. "We met, as you were going to observe, at the repository of the Beauchamp antiquities yonder; but who the deuce could have conjectured, at that time, when you know I quizzed you so deservedly upon your queer conception of a London newspaper;—who could have anticipated, that within the space of a little month you should yourself become the hero of a tale of wonder; and should furnish, in your own happy person, the most delicious treats which have been

served up to public appetite since the institution of those delightful oracles of taste and truth! What a lucky lucky dog thou art! Why, there are men of merit, and men of fortune too, in London, who have been for years sighing in vain for notoriety, who have spared no pains, no expense, to obtain it, while you have tumbled from the clouds, as it were, on purpose to prevent all the world from mentioning any other name than your's and lady Emily's through the whole winter."

To no purpose did lord Roseville frown and knit his brow; of no avail were the burning blushes of Edward and lady Emily; the garrulity of the captain was only excelled by his impudence. He proceeded—

"There was colonel Tiverton with his hawks—they did for a day or two—Captain Jefferies with his dog as big as a bull was talked of for a week—York races and a fair jockey led the conversation rather longer—the black and yellow hosen of two stout varlets actually gained some little notoriety for

their mistress:—but these are all ephemera—mere pips of popularity—mere dots of dashing:—but to be the hero of a tale so wonderful, so romantic, so delightfully mysterious—oh, happy happy Montagu!"

"Neville—Neville, there are bounds to human patience.—Have some mercy on us, I beseech you!" said the earl.

"Pardon me, my lord,—but for the soul of me I cannot help envying this young topic. Go where I would, though the town has yet scarcely a single soul in it, I was accosted with—"Pray, captain, who is this Montagu that picked the Roseville out of the water?"—"Dear Neville," says another, "you know the family, tell us, is this young hero so very handsome, so very learned, so very every thing?"—"Can there be any truth in the story," cries a third, "that lady Emily was smitten at first sight with the foundling; and that she was eluding the pursuit of the marquis, and determined to throw herself into the lake, when Mr.

Montagu spread out his arms to prevent her, and they both fell in together?"

"Captain Neville," said the countess of Roseville, unable to restrain her indignation, "you bring blushes into my face and pain into my heart."

"How so, dearest lady Roseville?" said the captain. "Of all the world, your ladyship is the last I would pain or offend.—How have I now done either?"

"By bringing to my recollection," said the countess, "how often I have encouraged your scandal, by laughing at your eccentric levity. What you have now retailed respecting my own child makes me feel how thoughtlessly I have acted in smiling at your tattle, when the laugh has perhaps been purchased by the pain inflicted on the feelings of others."

"Mercy on us!" said the earl, "where are we wandering? What is there in the rattle of captain Neville to require such a sentimental remark? For my part, I always

enjoy his ingenious inventions. The people must be very weak, or very silly, who expect historical paintings from such a well-known caricaturist!"

The countess, as was her usual practice, silently submitted to a reproof, which only served to elevate her in the respect of every judicious and feeling hearer.

Not so doctor Hoare.

"I cannot help differing from your lordship," said the doctor.

"Then, if you please," replied the earl, "we'll adjourn the debate to another sitting. Neville, if you want me, you'll find me in the library."

The captain instantly followed his lordship out of the room.

"Notwithstanding the speaker has left the chair," said doctor Hoare, "I cannot help going on with my speech. I agree with lady Roseville, that these male gossips, these privileged prattlers, often inflict more pain by

their caricatures, as the earl calls them, than the most venomous propagators of downright falsehoods. For, as a caricature excites risibility only by its distortion of something that we have seen and known, so these mental caricaturists only claim attention by building their scandalous or ridiculous tale upon some base of truth and fact, however slender; and are therefore more mischievous than a serious slanderer, inasmuch as an innuendo is less easily refuted than an assertion."

"I coincide most cordially, doctor, in your excellent remarks," said the duke of Delaware, who always spoke in a pompous tone. "The unfortunate accident of the horses taking fright in the marquis of Arberry's phaëton, you see, has reached the town; and this man, who does not blush to be called a captain, can find no better employ, even in a time of danger to his country, than to frisk about a lady's drawing-

room, and tell the story in a hundred various shapes, till it at length becomes the distorted caricature you have described it."

"And yet to take serious notice of such tattlers is giving importance to feathers," said the marquis. "What, for instance, will lady Emily say to the story of leaping into the arms of Mr. Montagu?"

Edward's heart beat strong and quick at this question—every eye was turned towards lady Emily; when the door opened, and a servant summoned lord Barton and doctor Hoare to lord Roseville's library.

This interruption relieved both Edward and lady Emily, whose cheeks were alike suffused with blushes. The countess observed their situation with pain, and endeavoured to divert the attention of the party by saying,

"What can have brought captain Neville into Cumberland again?"

"Perhaps, madam," said the marquis with a smile, "he has heard some great

man express a wish to send a message to my lord Roseville, and he has offered his services. You know they tell a story of his travelling more than fifty-six miles without stopping, merely to deliver a glove at Brighton, which had been dropped in Pall-Mall——"

The captain re-entered the room as the marquis was speaking—

"Oh fie—fie, my lord marquis, how can you lend yourself to such scandal?"

"What, jealous, captain!" said lady Emily. "Ah, the vulgar proverb is true, I see, Two of a trade can never agree."

"Don't wonder, lady Emily, if I punish you for that wicked remark," said the captain. "I dare say now, you have no curiosity in the world to know what brings me here?"

"Not a spark."

"No—I dare say not.—Though I shouldn't wonder if a certain event, which every body knows is to take place in the

course of the winter, was to be a little hastened in consequence of my journey hither. If, for instance, lord Barton should be, or is, or is about to be appointed successor to a certain person, at a certain court, which may occasion his speedy return to the continent——"

"What do you allude to, captain?" eagerly inquired the countess.

"Nothing, madam—nothing worth knowing. Ladies have no curiosity, you know—not a spark!—not a spark!"

After some time doctor Hoare re-appeared, and, leading the countess into a corner of the room, beckoned Edward to join them apart from the rest of the company.

"You and I, young gentleman," said the doctor, "are new acquaintances,—yet I flatter myself you have seen enough of me to believe me your disinterested friend. Here, however, is one," continued he, bowing to the countess, "who has known me longer, who has honoured me with her

confidence from her youth; and she will confirm to you, how much your merit and your situation have interested me in your favour. Had I a fortune, old bachelor as I am, and without a relation that is known to me, I verily believe I should adopt you as my heir. As it is, I can only offer you that, which young men of your age are too apt to consider of no value—my advice. Yet, sir, the fruit of a long and busy life's experience is not to be despised as valueless, and that fruit I offer you, officiously perhaps, but certainly with the conviction of its usefulness."

"I hope," said Edward, "that it is superfluous to say, that my gratitude to lady Roseville would alone make me obedient to the counsels of one who has the honour of her confidence; but suffer me to add, sir, with sincerity, that I am so sensible of the effects of my own inexperience, that, whatever you may have the goodness to offer me, in the shape of either condemnation or of

caution, I shall receive as a testimony of your kind regard."

"I shall act, sir," replied the doctor, "upon the persuasion of your sincerity. To the point then:—Captain Neville, who has a second time travelled here at the request of the dowager lady Beauchamp, respecting the transfer of Beauchamp Abbey to the earl, and to give some further orders about packing up the old family plate and pictures, which are to be sold by auction in London, has brought letters for my lord, from government, which contain the appointment he has been so desirous of obtaining for lord Barton, as *chargé des affaires* under lord —— at Lisbon. The state of the political world at the present moment renders it uncertain whether we shall be able to retain a minister there or not; and the time of lord Barton's departure is consequently uncertain;—it may take place in one month, in six months, or not at all. He is, however, to repair instantly to town; and I, who had, reluctantly

I confess, agreed to accompany lord Barton as his secretary, was summoned to attend him. When, however, I consented to accept this appointment, I knew no one person whom my sense of obligation to lord Roseville's family allowed me to recommend as a substitute, or my own age would have prevented me from again undertaking a situation of fatigue. Since I have had the pleasure of Mr. Montagu's acquaintance, that obstacle to the indulgence of my own inclination is completely and satisfactorily removed. I have ventured, without consulting you, to recommend you, sir, to the earl, as in every respect qualified for the situation; and I now put to the test your assertion of regarding my counsel, by advising, nay urging, and, if lady Roseville will join me, commanding you to accept the appointment."

"Generous, excellent man!" exclaimed the countess, "I see the nobleness, the wisdom, of your conduct, and my heart

approves it more warmly than my tongue is able to applaud it. Nay, I cannot but regard the coincidence of circumstances which has brought about such an arrangement, as an act of Providence in favour of my excellent young friend. It is a situation, and precisely the only situation, adapted to his peculiar circumstances:—for here though we all vie, and justly vie, with each other, in showing every respect to the individual merit of Mr. Montagu, as well as evincing our gratitude to the preserver of our dear child; yet I am sure, doctor, that his own good sense, and his own right feelings, render it unnecessary for us to say one word upon what may be the different conduct of others, to whom his introduction, in his present ambiguous situation, would be painful to himself and to our family. And if a profession were decided on, whether it be the church or the bar,—for the army I am sure would never be his choice,—though I grant that the influence and purse of lord Roseville,

added to the weight of his own talents, could not fail to procure him an ultimate independence; yet, how many humiliating scenes must have been passed through in the jostling and elbowing a crowd of noble and wealthy competitors, to whom the mystery of his origin would be a subject of sport, and the dependency of his lot a theme of scorn! Now, on the contrary, introduced as a man of talent and learning at a foreign court, in the most honourable station to which mere merit can in the first instance elevate him, a door is opened to the exercise of his powers; and the first honours of the state, the highest orders of nobility itself, may prove the just reward of talents thus beneficially exerted for the interests of the country: and even in the least successful issue that can follow such an appointment, a competence for life is certain."

Edward listened with silent attention to this speech and the preceding. There was, as lady Roseville expressed it, an adapta-

tion of the offer to his apparent circumstances so striking, that a moment's hesitation on his part could be construed into nothing but madness or perverseness. Yet, while Edward felt the force of this truth, the recent receipt of the little billet of his supposed father made him not only pause, but almost at once refuse it. The idea of quitting England without that interview to which he looked with so much anxiety, he could not for a moment entertain.

"Does any obstacle or objection to this arrangement, which may have escaped us, suggest itself to you?" said the countess, with a look that expressed her surprise at his silence.

"Forgive me, madam," said he. "Nor do you, sir, or either of you, I beg, construe my silence into an insensibility of such uncommon, such unprecedented generosity. If I have hesitated to express my thanks, believe me, it is not because my heart does not deeply feel the gratitude——"

"We are not talking about thanks, or gratitude," said Dr. Hoare; "we only ask your acceptance of a certain three hundred a year for life, with the probability of becoming a minister of state. But perhaps you have better prospects of your own, which you do not choose to relinquish for such paltry overtures."

"Oh, sir," said Edward with a sigh, "there is only one possibility that could induce me to waver."

"What is that?" said the doctor.

"Pardon me," said Edward; "it is weakness, I own, to cherish such a thought."

"Name it, and let us judge," rejoined the doctor; while the countess, associating the idea of her daughter's love with the remark of Edward, turned pale with apprehension of his answer.

"It is the hope—the possibility at least—of discovering who were my parents," said Edward.

Lady Roseville revived at his reply; and

at that instant the earl entered the room with lord Barton. He immediately approached the group in the corner, and after a few complimentary remarks to Dr. Hoare and Edward, he beckoned his son to join them, and very formally entered upon the subject which had occasioned Edward so much perplexity. His consent to the measure was not even asked by the earl or lord Barton; but the latter displayed an unusual air of respect and attention to his new secretary, and studied so much to appear condescending, that Edward felt already the superiority which his lordship so awkwardly endeavoured to throw off.

This unexpected event occasioned the Roseville family to repair, unfashionably early as it was, to London. The earl and the rest of the party were to stop a few days at the seat of the duke of Delaware, in Derbyshire; but Edward and captain Neville were to set off in three days, in the carriage of the latter, to the metropolis.

The suddenness of this arrangement, to

which Edward could oppose no avowed objection, allowed him only a short time to take leave of his old friends.

Mrs. Newton, the old housekeeper, had gone to reside with her relations at Durham. Adam Osborn retired to a cottage near Mrs. Enfield's, to whom Edward introduced him, and in whose kind attentions the old domestic found some consolation for the heart-rending grief occasioned by his removal from his old abode.

Having taken a most affectionate and tender farewell of his fond foster-mother and of his sister Eliza, as he called the Enfields, Edward now prepared, with a heavy heart, for his journey to London. The knowledge, however, that the mysterious stranger had repaired there before him, and the hope that his vigilance would soon learn his new destination, and that he would consequently see and advise with him, considerably lessened the regret with which he quitted the scenes of his youth.

CHAPTER II.

A SURPRISE.

NEVER were two persons imprisoned together in a post-chaise who were so ill adapted to afford each other amusement, as were Edward Montagu and captain Neville. The latter, "graced with a sword, but worthier of a fan," was so totally unused to rational converse, that, being excluded by Edward's ignorance of the fashionable world from the only topics on which he could expatiate, he became a sullen, yawning, sleeping partner; only occasionally opening his mouth to curse the tardiness of the postillions, who drove at the rate of eight miles an hour, or to bewail the badness and the stupid dullness of the roads, though the roads were in most excellent order, and the face of the

country through which they travelled smiled with a thousand charms.

Edward, thus compelled to silence, passed the greater part of the journey in a retrospection of his past life and feelings. The rapid and brilliant changes of the last few weeks had left him little or no leisure for contemplation. He had no other employment than to think; and the more he recollected, the more he was amazed. The form and words of his supposed father now with increased force tortured his memory.

Next in point of force and interest, if not equal, to this master-feeling of his soul was that impression which the lovely lady Emily had wrought upon his mind. He experienced a pleasure in recollecting the delight which in infancy she gave him, when her beautiful lips kissed from his hand the tear which sympathy had caused her to shed; and he made it the dangerous occupation of his thoughts to image her in all the various situations in which he had

more recently beheld her—to repeat internally her observations, fraught with wit, taste, and feeling—to enumerate to himself the arts in which she excelled, and the numerous instances of her generosity and benevolence, which even in so short a space of time had fallen within his knowledge.

It was now the evening of their last day's journey; and Edward's mind was thus occupied, when the captain, suddenly starting from a long silence, exclaimed,

"I wonder what sort of figure the marchioness elect will cut:—now I recollect, she has never been in London since she was a babe. Yes, this positively may be called her first winter in London. Curse me if she won't be quizzed most horridly, in spite of her mopuses, unless I take her under my wing!"

"Mopuses! and marchioness! and quizzing!" said Edward. "Of whom do you speak?—What marchioness?"

"Why, man, thy rustic stupidity is in-

corrigible—I mean lady Emily Roseville—that is, the marchioness of Arberry that is to be."

A tremor seized the whole frame of Edward. So wonderfully constituted is the human machine, that the same plain truth which he had often heard before, coming at that moment in sudden contact with the thoughts he was indulging, struck him with a violence as powerful as if then for the first moment he had heard it; and his heart felt a pang painful beyond description. He continued silent, and the captain again fell into a state of apathy.

Edward was alarmed at his own sensations.

"What is this?" inquired he of himself. "Why does the recurrence of a former idea, the marriage of lady Emily, create this perturbation? Surely I am in the possession of my reason?—Yet these feelings seem afraid of reason. Good God!—what thoughts, what delusions of the heart are these? Ed-

ward, beware!—Honour warns thee that thy peace is in danger!—Oh, mischievous dream of what might have been my bliss, why do you thus tantalize a poor dependent? Why, in the candid and unmasked countenance of the loveliest, the most amiable of her sex, do I see that flattering approval which gives birth to the wildest hopes, only to be displaced by the most dire regrets? Ah, thou mysterious mortal, who, holding in thy hand the veil that screens my destiny, yet refusest to withdraw it,—if indeed thou art not the instrument of more than infernal malice, quickly appear again, and let me know the secret of my fate! What, if instead of a dependent of lord Roseville, I should be his equal in fortune, and superior to him in birth? What, if instead of venerating at a hopeless distance the object of my heart's worship, I am entitled to stand forth a compeer with competitors for the richest prize that ever made men rivals?—Why does he delay the revelation of the all-important truths which must fix my fate for

ever? Wherefore should he thus shun me? Why should he fly thus suddenly to London? E'en at the moment I am indulging this vain hope, he may be no more.—He talked of danger to his life—of enemies. Scarcely is there more of mystery than of phrensy in his words and conduct.—May he not then be some unfortunate, whom insanity has driven from his friends?—May not his deranged imagination have received a false impression of some fancied resemblance of my face or story to another's?—May not his friends have discovered his retreat, and again confined him?—Confinement, sickness, madness, or death, are all probable causes of sufficient force to make me dread his future absence and his silence. What, if it be only sickness?—If his recovery be delayed till I have left the country, and till the marquis of Arberry has led to the altar——"

The thought was like a shaft of fire shot through his brain; and, totally forgetful of his companion, he raised his hand with violence to his forehead, and exclaimed aloud,

"God forbid!"

The exclamation aroused the captain, who started from a nap with some degree of terror; and Edward, thus brought to recollection, inquired,

"Where are we now, sir?"

"In London, thank Heaven!" said the captain, letting down the glass of the carriage; "and after such a four days' purgatory, even the sight of thy muddy kennels, O Oxford-street, and the sound of your rattling chains, ye rumbling drays, appear to my senses like the water-works of Versailles, and the melody of *Viotti's* violin! Upon my honour, I don't mean to offend you, my dear fellow; but if you should be at your wit's end for a dinner, never advertise yourself as an agreeable companion in a post-chaise; for, by all that's horrible, my lord Roseville might as well have packed one of the British Museum brown mummies in the carriage as your dumb worship."

"We have wanted subjects for conversation, to be sure," said Edward; "but now,

sir, I shall torment you with questions.—What square is this we are now crossing?"

"Portman Square: and that corner house, 'laud we the gods,' is the end of our journey."

"That is your house, then?"

"No, it is not—I am not incumbered with the cares of a household. That mansion is at present in the occupation of sir Everard Beauchamp.

"Sir Everard Beauchamp!—Sir Everard Beauchamp, did you say, captain Neville?"

"Yea, verily—I did say sir Everard Beauchamp, who, together with his mother the dowager, has there taken up a temporary residence, and there at present I am an inmate."

The carriage drew up to the door, and the knocker thundered under the hands of the captain's footman. The doors were thrown back, the step of the carriage was let down, and the captain was already in the hall, ere Edward could find words to express his astonishment.

He then leaped out of the carriage, and called after him,

"Captain Neville!—Captain Neville!—You will permit one of your servants to show me lord Roseville's."

The captain turned round, came back, and, mistaking the reluctance of Edward to enter for rustic timidity, placed his arm under his own, and almost by force led him up stairs, exclaiming aloud,

"Help!—Help there, ladies! In pity, your help—or here is a rural swain will faint with bashful fears!"

Fortunately lady Beauchamp had some music that evening; and the concert having already begun, the instruments overpowered the captain's voice.

"No—no—no!" said Edward; "you misconceive me, captain Neville—I dislike the—that is, you know the Beauchamps are——"

"Very good sort of folks, I assure you. So no more ridiculous scruples. Why, what

the devil would you do by yourself at lord Roseville's? Come along, man—This is your home till lord Barton arrives."

Then, turning to a servant on the landing-place,

"Announce captain Neville and Mr. Montagu."

Captain Neville and Mr. Montagu was echoed as they ascended, and again as the doors of a superb apartment were thrown open, and discovered a small but brilliant assembly.

"Montagu!—Montagu!—Which is he? which is he?" was buzzed round the room, as the captain conducted Edward to the mistress of the house, who stood reclining her elbow on a harp at the upper end of the apartment.

Lady Beauchamp, formerly signora Belloni, was now in her fortieth year. She was still extremely beautiful, though her face had lost some of those dazzling charms which first captivated the father of sir Eve-

rard. Her person was considerably above the middle stature, of a majestic and commanding form, perfectly in unison with which were the grace of her attitudes and the dignified expression of her countenance. Her eyes, which were large, were black, and her forehead was shaded by luxuriant locks of the same coloured hair; her nose was aquiline, and her lips full. The general effect of her whole appearance was an irresistible impression of her great mental superiority; and the beholder could not resist the feeling of admiration which her presence inspired.

She received Edward with marked respect, inquired after the health of the Rosevilles with great seeming kindness; and complimented him in the most delicate strain upon the gallantry he had displayed in the rescue of lady Emily.

The entrance of the travellers, and apologies for their dress, having occasioned a short interruption to the concert, a tall thin

figure now approached the hostess, who introduced him to Edward as her uncle, under the name of signor Belloni.

The signor was apparently not more than ten years older than his niece; his face was a long oval, of a very sallow complexion, and was strongly marked with the characters of profound hypocrisy.

"London should be congratulated," said Belloni, addressing Edward, "on the possession of a prodigy today."

Edward was at a loss how to answer this address, which seemed to imply that the signor knew his history,—a circumstance which amazed him. He bowed in silence.

Lady Beauchamp marked his surprise; and letting fall the train of her robe, which had been gracefully folded with a studied elegance over her arm as he entered, she held out to him her hand, and with a look of captivating tenderness said,

"Come, sir, you must be conscious that a story at once so marvellous and mysterious

as is yours, must become public. But had it been otherwise, your superior accomplishments would not have remained unknown to my uncle, in whose correspondence with the signor Palmoretti, Mr. Montagu has made no inconsiderable figure. Let me therefore have the happiness of uniting the hands of two persons in a friendship that I am sure will be attended with the best effects to both."

Edward was still more than ever astonished. She thus continued—

"For my own part, Mr. Montagu, you were master of my affections from the moment I was informed of your attachment to the venerable symbols of the antiquity of my poor Alfred's family. The sentiments which you delivered on these subjects are so perfectly in unison with my own, that my heart was penetrated with them, and my memory will ever retain them. Your kind attentions to the old domestic too; your noble defence of him against the rude ridi-

cule of yonder captain, who had the ingenuity to tell his own disgrace; in short, all that I have heard of Mr. Montagu has served to increase my admiration of his conduct, and to excite my wish to behold him. The favour which Neville has thus bestowed on me in bringing you to Portman Square so early, will be his redemption for many offences."

"I will only add, sir," said Belloni, "to what my niece has said, that if, peradventure, the counsel or opinions of a man long conversant with society, as it exists in most of the European states, may prove of the slightest service to one so much younger in the ways of men, and he will condescend to receive such as I can offer, I shall feel a very great pleasure in the friendly interchange of thoughts with a young gentleman of so much intellectual worth, as I have the best authority for believing Mr. Montagu to be."

"I shall be proud, sir, of your friendly notice," said Edward: "novice, indeed, as I

am, I shall, I fear, no less need the exercise of your patience and indulgence than of your judgment. But," continued he, turning to lady Beauchamp, " grateful as I am, madam, for these unexpected marks of kindness, I cannot resist the impulse of surprise, which prompts me to inquire how it is that I hear from your ladyship such sentiments respecting Beauchamp Abbey and the worthy Adam Osborn, while, at the same time, I understand that the one is to be brought to public sale, and the other has been rudely discarded."

Lady Beauchamp blushed, and could not hide her confusion. Recovering her ease quickly, she observed—

" That the old steward has been discarded is true;—that he should have been rudely dismissed is a contradiction to our orders, which shall be inquired into. Respecting the Abbey—there are some particulars which I am desirous, for many reasons, you should know.—Uncle, will you——"

Belloni bowed assent, and, taking the arm of Edward, drew him to a corner of the room; while the lady of the mansion, with a recollection of her situation, turned towards the company, and, with grace, apologized for the interruption of the concert, which was resumed with a full piece of Haydn's.

Apart from the observation of the company, a conversation took place between Edward and Belloni.

"Observe, sir," said the latter, "that melancholy figure leaning on the piano;—that is sir Everard Beauchamp. Enveloped in an impenetrable reserve, scarcely any thing beyond a monosyllable escapes his lips, and it is as easy to measure space as to probe his thoughts or wishes. With an unaccountable indifference to every thing around him, the young stoic seems to have neither the passions nor affections of humanity: the pleasures of Paris and of London, to all appearance, impress him no more than they do the figure that supports these candles."

"This must be disease," said Edward.

"It is a symptom of disease, beyond all doubt; but we have in vain explored the cause."

"How long has he been thus?"

"From his boyish days: it first became remarkable when he was about twelve years old—the period when youth begins to enter on the joyful scenes of life, and frolic in the fairy fields of hope; 'twas at that age he first showed these symptoms of a deep and settled melancholy."

"It is a melancholy—not a sullen spirit, then, poor youth!"

"Sometimes the one, sometimes the other: for instance, in this affair of the Abbey, 'tis sheer perverseness. He trembles at the mention of visiting the seat of his ancestors; yet, when a reason of his terror is demanded, he is sullenness itself. When his opinion as to breaking up the establishment, and selling his life interest in the estate, was asked, his countenance gleamed with the only smile of

joy I ever saw there, and he exclaimed—"O, yes, yes, yes; that will make me happy!" And since we have determined to do so, I think his general demeanour has been rather more cheerful."

"'Tis strange, 'tis very strange!" said Edward in an under tone of voice, with a look of surprise.

"'Tis lamentable," said Belloni with an air of pity. "If the means we are now adopting," continued he, "do not succeed in rousing his mind from this state, the alternative must be an application, according to your laws, to obtain authority for continuing his person and estates under the guardianship of his mother. These means are the diversions and amusements which London affords: we intend to try the effects of a residence here for the ensuing winter, and in such an undertaking lady Beauchamp and myself anxiously solicit the aid of every friend to the family."

Edward bowed in silence: his eyes natu-

rally directed themselves upon this new object of his pity and surprise, sir Everard. The young man stood with his arms folded in a posture of deep meditation; his eyes, with an unmeaning steadiness, were fixed upon a chandelier suspended from the cieling of the apartment, and he seemed perfectly insensible to every thing around him.

When the music ceased, he started as from a reverie, and his mother, who was constantly at his elbow, led him towards Edward and introduced him. His countenance was an interesting picture of melancholy; but it was rather the melancholy of heartfelt grief than of a disordered imagination. His complexion was a pale olive; he was tall and thin; and the negligence of his dress and person evinced how little his mind regarded the impression of his appearance upon others.

"Sir Everard Beauchamp," said his mother, "will not take much pains to win

your esteem, Mr. Montagu; but your judgment will not be slow in discovering how much he merits it."

Sir Everard was silent; but the smile of contempt, accompanied with an expressive glance of his eye, plainly said, "What hypocrisy!"

"Come, come, my Everard," continued she, "shake off this gloom. Here is a gentleman of your own age, in every respect worthy of your friendship, and who is desirous of rendering you service."

"Nonsense! nonsense!" said sir Everard. "Why am I to be thus perpetually tormented? What is it that you would have more of me?"

"How strangely you talk, my son!" said lady Beauchamp with a frown.

"How strangely you act, my mother!" replied he with a sigh. "Let me retire—I am drowsy—My head aches with the noise of these fiddles."

"You are not partial to instrumental music then, I presume, sir?" said Edward, with a view to challenge his attention.

"You are at liberty to presume just what you please, sir," said the baronet. "Come, let me retire—my—my—mother."

Edward was not to be so easily repulsed; he attributed to disease, and not to rudeness, this reply, and would have rejoined; but in an instant sir Everard quitted the room, followed by Belloni, while lady Beauchamp detained Edward in conversation, till she was summoned by the conductor of the concert, who was a professional artist, to take the part allotted her in the performances of the evening. She immediately placed her new guest in a situation where he could not fail to observe the charms of her person, as she displayed them in unison with those of her voice and musical science, in an Italian air, accompanied by herself on the harp. The strain was amorous, and the masterly execution of her finger was only equalled by the

enchanting melody of her vocal tones; while the effects of both were excelled by the expression of her syren smiles and gestures.

Edward for a moment was entranced.

The whole company were clamorous in the indication of their applause; and cries of "Bravo!" "Bravissimo!" overpowered the more rustic exclamations of "Good Heaven!" "Wonderful!" and "Delightful!" which burst from the lips of Edward. For the moment, his father, lady Emily, sir Everard, all the world, and every creature was forgotten, save the Circe of the scene before him. After the conclusion of the air, Edward remained enchanted; his wondering ears still echoed the sweet notes; his wondering eyes still gazed upon the bewitching fair one, as with a studied air of dignity she rose from the crimson velvet stool on which she had been seated.

The concert was now over, and the party began to retire. From a dream so new, so intoxicating, Edward was aroused by a smart

blow on the shoulders; and turning round, he beheld captain Neville leaning on the arm of a gentleman, and smothering a loud laugh with both his hands.

"Why, my young friend," said Neville, "what will become of your veneration for old daddy what's-his-name, at the Abbey; and all the old quizzes in tapestry or canvass; if you suffer yourself to be charmed with the pleasures of this wicked town at the very first moment of entering it?"

Ere Edward could rally sufficient courage to answer this abrupt attack, lady Beauchamp joined them.

"Half a dozen people sup with me, Neville," said she: "you and Mr. Montagu will honour me of course?"

"I must beg my excuse for this evening," said Neville; "martyrdom to honour it will be; but I am under a positive promise to give Ellison here his revenge for some strokes of good fortune last week, and must therefore tear myself away. But I have

sent one of my fellows to Grosvenor Square, to let Roseville's people know that Mr. Montagu is arrived, and makes this place his home; of course, he, a happy dog, will mingle with the enviable set at your ladyship's *petit souper*."

Lady Beauchamp now took the hand of Edward, and led him through two or three rooms to an elegant saloon, where a repast consisting of all the delicacies of the season was spread; and where, instead of half a dozen, at least a score of persons of both sexes were already assembled.

Though the experience of Edward could not afford him much information of the state of manners among the great, he had nevertheless both heard and seen enough of the fashionable world not to expect those starch formalities, and that ceremonious behaviour among the present race of fashionables, which distinguished the polite from the vulgar a century ago. Ease and freedom, he was aware, were the fundamental principles of

the present code of fashionable legislation: but, even with this previous knowledge, he was not prepared to witness such ease, or listen to such freedom, as characterized this supper, without betraying a bashful astonishment that formed no small part of the evening's entertainment to his more accomplished but less refined companions.

In fact the party, of which Edward now made one, consisted, not of the most respectable persons in high life, but of some ladies of distinction whose purses were occasionally recruited at the card-tables of the hostess; of others, who not having married till after their children were of age, could not easily gain admission into better company; of men of wit without fortune, and men of fortune without wit. Here the glass circulated as freely as the jest, and delicacy seemed a restraint that was laid aside for the evening.

Such was the situation of Edward, when the servant of captain Neville, who had

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been sent to Grosvenor Square, entered the saloon, and delivered to him a letter.

"For me!" exclaimed he. "Impossible!"

"Yes, sir, it is for you; and the gentleman who wrote it desired I would n't give it to any body but yourself. He was waiting to see you."

"It must be a mistake.—I do not know a single creature in London;—and yet the superscription warrants my unclosing it.—Have I permission?"

"Oh, by all means," said lady Beauchamp. "Some damsel in disguise, perchance, has followed you from your rural haunts, and now impatiently waits to throw herself at your victorious feet. For shame, sir, don't delay."

Edward bowed, broke the wax, and read the

LETTER.

"The Being from whom you so reluctant-
"ly tore yourself away, near the woodman's

" hovel, has sought you at the splendid " mansion of your patron; has waited with " a palpitating heart for your arrival; and " now with sorrow hears that the charms of " a syren, or the arts of a monk, detain you " their prisoner. Beware!—You are in " danger!—I watch you.—Continue worthy " of my love, and when you least expect me " you shall see me! Farewell.—Beware the " syren Beauchamp—beware the monk " Belloni!"

As he read these few words, the paper which contained them trembled in his hands. His senses, which the moment before were rising into a state of riot, were instantly sobered. He became pale, a faintness seized him, and he suddenly left the apartment.

Belloni insisted upon conducting him to his chamber; and Edward, evading as much as possible the discovery of the true cause of his emotion, begged him to apologize for his abrupt retiring on the plea of sudden illness, arising from the effects of his jour-

ney; and not in the least degree connected with the contents of the letter, which was merely on business relating to lord Roseville.

With this excuse Belloni returned to the saloon, though his penetration prevented him from believing it to be true; and Edward, left to himself, again and again read over the words "Beware Belloni!"

"Why, what have I to fear from Belloni?" thought Edward. "What is Belloni to me? or what can such an one as I am be to the signor Belloni? Monk!—How is that again?—How can he call the signor Belloni "the monk Belloni?" What mystery hangs over this unknown, this interesting stranger! He seems to possess supernatural powers.—How else should he thus know every step I take? If he be indeed the author of my existence, why does he assume this veil?—why does he delay the transport of our mutual embrace? Such cold caution makes me almost doubt.—Oh, could

a father for an hour delay to call me his before the assembled world? He pleads his danger, and my interest. Heaven is my judge, that no self-danger could deter, no future interest could seduce me from his arms:—how then can he thus avoid me? Yet it would be worse than death to part with the sweet hope that he is my father!—Oh, no! no!—till the last lingering drop of life shall quit my heart, let me enjoy the dream, e'en though it be nothing but a dream!"

Such was the train of thought into which the mind of Edward sunk, after Belloni had retired. About half an hour had elapsed when he was startled from these meditations by a very gentle tap at the chamber door—so gentle, that he distrusted at the first his sense of hearing, until the knocking was again repeated.

Opening the door, he started back with surprise, and something like terror, at the appearance of sir Everard Beauchamp, in his night-gown, barefooted, with his long

black hair hanging loosely over his shoulders. The fore finger of his left hand was placed upon his lips, and his right hand was raised as a caution of silence. His eyes were cast wildly fearful behind him, as he crept softly on the carpet of Edward's room, and gently closed the door: then turning to him with a look of sorrow that pierced his heart, he placed both his hands upon the shoulders of Edward, heaved a deep sigh, and tears rolled down his cheeks.

Edward, prevented from speaking by his gestures, remained silent, with a degree of horror awaiting the issue of the scene.

"You are humane," at length, in a tender whispering tone, said sir Everard.

"I trust so," said Edward.

"I am miserable!—most miserable!"

"Can I serve you, sir?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Hush!—Hush!—The keeper sleeps—if he wake—oh God!" striking his fore-

head—" if I am discovered—stripes, ignominious stripes—Hush!—I must be brief—I spoke harshly to you tonight—Forgive me—'Twas a trick—Mark me—I would have them think I hate you; for, should they suspect a dog of being kind to me, or of being beloved by me, they would—hush!—they would poison it!"

" Almighty powers!" said Edward. " For Heaven's sake, sir, say how I can do you service?"

" Hush!—We must contrive it. I am never left alone with any human creature—but I'll contrive it. Only assure me that they shall not make you hate me—that they shall not persuade you to believe me—mad;—at least do not think I am so yet—what they may make me—I shudder to—But be careful—don't betray me by any signs of pity or regard—be careful, and you may prove my saviour. Don't speak—Hush!—Good night—good night!"

Edward, without speaking, implied his

heart's wishes and intentions by gestures; and followed the unhappy youth to his chamber, where he listened a moment or two, and had the satisfaction to observe all was silent.

Late, however, as was the hour, the rude mirth of the party below ascended in a horrid contrast with the scene he had just witnessed; and as he again closed the door of his own apartment, he exclaimed to himself,

"Can I be in London? Surely such things cannot be in London! I am dreaming of events more likely to happen in some lone castle on the snow-covered Alps, than in a mansion in the very heart of the British metropolis!"

What Edward however had seen and heard was not delusion; and he was compelled to admit, that the uncommon is nevertheless the possible.

CHAPTER III.

THE PARAGRAPH.

EDWARD'S first waking thoughts were of the mysterious letter and the no less mysterious visit which he had received on the preceding evening. Combining the caution contained in the former with the impressions which the latter had occasioned, he could not, with all the charity of his liberal nature, resist the conviction that in the character of Belloni there must be something wrong: and if so—could Belloni's niece be innocent? Into what society, then, had captain Neville introduced him? He recollected, at the same time, all the insinuations of his old friend Adam, relative to the foreign connexions of sir Everard Beauchamp and his parents; and the result of these reflections

was a determination to take leave that morning of the family in Portman Square, and to fix himself at lord Roseville's.

With this intention he descended to the breakfast-room. The only person yet there was a servant in livery, who was lolling on the sofa and reading a newspaper: he started from his reposing position as Edward entered the room, and began to apply a napkin which he held in his hand to the backs of the chairs which were set round the table. At the same time, in a sort of half-address to Edward, he observed,

"I am sure it was spelt right—I beg pardon, sir, but don't you spell your name without the *e*? It 's monstrous provoking; but they 're always making such monstrous shocking blunders."

Edward, who had walked to the window without noticing this gentleman of the shoulder-knot, turned round with some surprise, and would have inquired the meaning of the question; but Jasper prevented him.

" Hope no offence, sir ; my name is Jasper, sir ; —perhaps the captain has mentioned Jasper to you, sir ?"

" No, indeed, Jasper," said Edward ; " this is the first time I——"

" All in good time, sir ; hope no offence ; shall always be happy to serve you, sir, or any of the captain's friends. I don't wish to brag, sir, but I have a little interest in that way to be sure ; and I must say the captain's monstrous generous for it. Oh lord, sir, in that *pic-nic* business I was his right-hand ; I fought him through the business ; and, though I say it, not another soul living besides Jasper Whiff could have got that there paragraph in so late as it was last night."

Here Jasper presented Edward with the newspaper, and pointed to the following paragraph :

" Yesterday evening arrived at the dow-
" ager lady Beauchamp's, in Portman
" Square, from the seat of the earl of Rose-
" ville, in Cumberland, captain Neville and

" Mr. Montague, the gentleman who so " miraculously preserved the life of lady " Emily Roseville at such an imminent risk " of his own. The extraordinary story of " Mr. Montague is already before the pub- " lic, and we have the most undoubted au- " thority for saying, that his figure and ac- " complishments far exceed all the reports " which had reached the metropolis before " him. It is understood that lord Roseville " has already settled on him an annuity fully " adequate to the high and fashionable " sphere into which he has been introduced, " and of which he promises to become so " great and enviable an ornament."

Edward read the paragraph, and looked at Jasper; and "read and looked—and looked and read again." His astonishment and his anger were predominant by turns; but he gave vent to neither by words. He turned the paper over and over again: he read the title and the date; still he could not believe in that which his eyes convinced him to be

true. At length, in a tone of angry surprise, he exclaimed—

" Is it possible !"

Jasper, who was not a little terrified at the dumb expression of Edward's countenance, was rejoiced to hear him speak, and now vainly imagining that it was joyful wonder that had so affected him, exclaimed—

" Why, sir, to Jasper it was possible, you see ; but if I had not been monstrous industrious, and monstrous lucky into the bargain, we should have been flung ; for the moment the captain had finished it, off I flew to the Strand, and who should I meet at the door but little Grubby, as we call him, the compositor !—" You 're too late, Jasper,—(for they all know me, sir)—you 're too late," says he ; " all's composed, and the devils " are gone to call up the pressmen." You see, your honour, I know the nature of these things, having once been a devil myself. So I shows him a shiner, and with a bribe of bread and cheese and beer, to the

office, I succeeded with the overseer; and by taking out a couple of sudden deaths, a fire in Oxford-market, a lottery puff, and the text of the sermon preached at St. James's, we made room for the paragraph; but I don't think another man in all London could have done the thing at any price."

"And if you had been tumbled to the bottom of Vesuvius ere you had done this I should not have known the shame and vexation of this moment," cried Edward. "What will lord Roseville's family think? What indignation, what contempt must they all feel for me when this accursed foolery reaches their sight!—Man! man! you know not the extent of the evil you have done me!"

Jasper gaped—Jasper trembled, and in all probability would have fainted with fright and astonishment, had not the appearance of Dr. Hoare, who was abruptly introduced, enabled him to make a precipitate retreat.

"You are naturally surprised to see me in London," said the doctor to Edward,

" when you supposed me in Derbyshire: you must, however, expect a hundred such surprises from the capriciousness of your patron. Scarcely was captain Neville's carriage out of sight, when the earl resolved that it was absolutely expedient that lord Barton should visit instantly three or four of the cabinet ministers in town, and that therefore his lordship and myself must that hour depart for the metropolis. We reached Grosvenor-square about two hours after midnight. I was sorry to learn you had taken up your residence with this family, and have hurried here without my breakfast to take you away. But, pray, what has ruffled your temper so early? You were scolding when I entered the room."

Edward, with real concern in his countenance, related the cause of his vexation, and pointed out the paragraph to the doctor; who, smiling at his simplicity, attempted to convince him that lord Roseville and his family were too well aware of the nature of

a London newspaper to pay any serious attention to such a paragraph; and that, even if they should notice it, it would be an easy task to explain the officiousness of Neville.

"Why should the captain do this?—what end is it to answer?—is it merely the love of mischief?" said Edward.

"No, no, my young philosopher," said the doctor; "you will soon discover the clue to these mysteries of fashion: it is not love of mischief, but love of notoriety."

"I do not comprehend," said Edward.

Dr. Hoare smiled again.

"You don't appear to be thoroughly acquainted with your friend Neville's character," said he.

"My friend, sir! I never saw him till by accident we met at Beauchamp Abbey. Why he came there I know not; the cause of his visit at Roseville Park I am as little acquainted with, and, in fact, his attention to me is altogether a mystery."

"I perceive it is," said the doctor, with

another expressive smile. "Do you know what fortune he has?"

"No."

"Do you know how he contrives to sport such a splendid appearance?"

"No."

"If you did, you would not be surprised at what you have just read with so much emotion: the honourable captain Neville, sir, lives upon paragraphs."

"Lives upon paragraphs!"

"Yes; and that very paragraph, for instance, which has given you so much uneasiness, will, in all probability, furnish his ways and means for the winter!"

"Explain; pray, explain."

"Listen then:—in this metropolis, Mr. Montagu, you will soon discover, to use the words of one of our most elegant poets, that 'Fashion in every thing bears sovereign sway:' in arts, in science, in manners, in morals, nay, even in religion, fashion is in all and over all supreme! Thus, sir, you shall see men

not only without moral or religious principles, but destitute of common knowledge, and devoid of common honesty, who are countenanced by the great and noble of their own sex, and courted, followed, and flattered by the most lovely and accomplished females of the nation. Ask, why is this so? and you will be told by this duke or duchess, that such and such another duke or duchess receives the man; that he makes himself irresistibly agreeable; that he knows every body, and every body knows him; that such men are necessary appendages to people of fashion; and, in short, a party is not deemed complete without a Neville or a Shuffleton: they don't know how it is, but it is the fashion. The passport, sir, to the tables of princes, to the drawing-rooms of nobility and genty, is fashion, which is synonymous with notoriety, and notoriety is to be purchased through the medium of a venal press. This art no man better understands than captain Neville, nor is there in the

whole fashionable world an individual who converts his knowledge to more advantage."

"He appears to belong to a species of which till this moment I was a stranger," cried Edward.

"His history is short, and it may be useful to you to know it," continued Dr. Hoare. "His father was a Yorkshire squire, who broke his neck in a fox-chase, and left his son very little more than the price of a pair of colours in the Guards. By his talents of mimickry and rhyming Neville rendered himself agreeable to a circle of young men of rank, who had been his school-fellows at Eton, and partly by their interest, and partly by their money, which he perhaps could not help winning, he gradually rose to the rank of captain; and, though on the prospect of a war he obtained leave to sell his commission, he is still captain Neville. Accident threw him in the way of a lady of fashion, who had written a play, to which

Neville tagged an epilogue, that became extremely popular. His fortune was established from that moment. He dressed in the most eccentric manner possible, that he might attract public notice; and when it was inquired "Who is he?" the answer was, "The author of the celebrated Epilogue." Among others to whom this vast fame introduced him was the proprietor of a newspaper, then recently established, and particularly addressed to the fashionable world. Neville, and a few other minor poets, wrote sonnets to themselves, and answered themselves in sonnets again, which were printed in this newspaper, and which it became fashionable to read, or rather spout, in the first circles. The newspaper-man was of course gratified by the profits of his increased sale, and Neville, in return, had the privilege of puffing and praising himself and his friends, and of sneering at and scandalizing his rivals and foes. From nonsensical verses the rage turned to a jargon of prose paragraphs,

which had the novelty of being constructed of most unintelligible words and sentences: they became, however, universally read, and were at first smiled at for their quaintness, then tolerated for their absurdity, and now must be for ever execrated as the foundation of an abuse of the liberty of the English press; which renders it doubtful whether ignorance itself be not preferable to intelligence through such prostituted sources!"

"You have opened my eyes, sir," said Edward, "to the perversion of one of the dearest privileges of an Englishman: but whilst I lament from my soul so great a public evil, I cannot help recurring to my individual case, and asking again, what purpose of captain Neville's can be answered by this paragraph?"

"I'll tell you:—Neville's debts have compelled him to some years absence from England. In that period many powerful rivals have started in the art of *paragraphing*, and the mystery itself has considerably sunk in

its credit and its value by a great increase of professors. The result is, that Neville sees the necessity of seeking new sources, and in you he imagines that he has sprung a mine which, by properly working, he can make far more productive than his paragraphs. I know this to be fact, but have not leisure at present to detail particulars."

Edward was about to make some inquiries concerning Belloni, when the Italian himself entered the apartment. He was soon followed by lady Beauchamp and her son. As the doctor was known to the family, and as her ladyship pressed his stay with earnestness, politeness compelled him to sit down to the breakfast-table.

Their conversation was cold, formal, and uninteresting. Sir Everard threw himself sullenly on a sofa, and, taking up the newspaper, seemed totally unmindful of any one present, except that now and then he stole a pity-asking glance at Edward, who sat opposite to him.

The gloom of the moment was, however, quickly dispelled by the appearance of Neville, in a morning gown, his hair half dressed, a slipper on one foot, and a Hessian boot upon the other, with three open letters in his hand. As he rushed with a theatrical air into the room, without regarding the presence of doctor Hoare, he exclaimed to Jasper, who followed him—

"O you divine creature! you omnipotent little fellow!" Then addressing himself to lady Beauchamp: "What an immense treasure have I parted with to your ladyship in that indefatigable Mercury! Do pray excuse me, my dear sir Everard, but I am all perturbation to see my *announce*."

As he spoke, he almost snatched the paper from the baronet, who, after a smile of contempt, sunk into the same image of melancholy which Edward had at first beheld him.

Neville, having read the paragraph, exclaimed—

"It 'll do!—It 'll do!—It 'll do!" and danced about the room as if frantic with joy.

"What will do, captain?" said doctor Hoare. "Perhaps when you have done dancing the hays you will condescend to explain?"

Neville pretended surprise at the appearance of the doctor, and begged a million of pardons for being astonished at seeing him in London—

"But, oh my good old doctor, congratulate me," continued he, "for this is the most fortunate moment of my life. My paragraph is still reeking from the press, and yet its magical operation has been successful already. See these trophies of victory," holding up the three letters.

"This is some new *hoax*, as you term it, I suppose, captain?" said lady Beauchamp.

"No, positively, no—all matter of fact—You shall hear—This is from one of the

richest and closest dogs on the turf—he has *shied* me lately—Now mark his style—

"Dear Neville,

"I know you took it queer that I did not stand it, when you wanted a replenish last week; but, I swear, I was as low myself as a horse-pond in summer. Luck has looked in upon me since: so, if you are not supplied, you know the rest. Yours,

ASHMORE."

"Thank you kindly, my noble lord Ashmore! Now mark again—This is from the lady of a rich city merchant, who gives more stylish fêtes at the west end of the town than any of our nobility. Hear her.

"Mrs. George Torrington presents compliments to captain Neville, and (perceiving by the newspapers that he is in town) takes the earliest opportunity to explain the cause of her not sending captain Neville a ticket for her last little fête in Portman Place. Mrs. T. understood from a friend that cap-

tain Neville and Mr. Robert Torrington had unfortunately had a misunderstanding respecting the subscription concerts last year, and that it would be the most unpleasant thing in the world for captain N. to meet Mr. Robert Torrington; and as it would have excited every body's surprise if Mr. Robert Torrington had been absent from his brother's fête, Mrs. George Torrington was under the very painful necessity of omitting the name of captain Neville on that occasion. Mrs. George Torrington has since learnt that she was imposed upon by the friend who reported the fracas, and that no such misunderstanding ever took place; and she therefore hopes, as she means to stay in Portman Place till after the holidays, that captain Neville, with his known good nature, will favour her with a call, to receive her sincere vows of penitence and contrition for having been so duped into even the appearance of a slight."

"So much for Mrs. Torrington," conti-

nued the captain; "her invention is at least equal to lord Ashmore's impudence! But I discard them both—I cut them for ever. Here is my idol (pressing the third letter to his lips); yes, this little billet is more valuable than quires of such letters, from such creatures as the Ashmores and the Torringtons. There, young Tyro—read there the greatest acquisition, the proudest triumph of my life."

There was no possibility of soberly replying to the jargon of this eccentric captain, or of stopping him in his career. Edward therefore, with a half smile, took the letter, and, unfolding the envelope, discovered that it was merely a blank cover, containing a card, on which were the words—

"The duchess of Belgrave at home."

"Why, captain," said Edward, holding the card letter between his finger and thumb, "is this a talisman, that the possession of it is of so much consequence to you?"

"It is—it is a talisman—a charm as magical in my possession as the finger of old Midas! Come, ask no questions: I'll answer all you would ask, and thus save half the time. The duchess of Belgrave, perhaps, you never read of in your old-fashioned country papers; but you will now see the delightful creature's name sparkling in every column of every paper daily. Years have not decreased the magic influence of that name. Nothing can resist its charm; the wisdom of our ablest politicians, the wit of our brightest geniuses, the purses of our wealthiest citizens, are all at her command. But Her Grace shall unfold herself to your rustic gaze, and her glories will strike you the more. It is, however, necessary that I should explain to you, that about four years ago her grace and your humble servant declared war against each other. It's no matter now who was to blame; we had till then been the most confidential allies, we instantly became the most desperate enemies. A few

months ago, as doctor Hoare will tell you, we met at Madrid, where the duchess with her family were waiting to join the British ambassador on their return to England. The same opportunity being embraced by lady Beauchamp and her party, of which I was one, and by lord Roseville and his family, we travelled in company through Spain to Portugal, and one packet brought us all over together from Lisbon to Falmouth. The incident of this journey very opportunely brought lord Roseville acquainted with his neighbours in Cumberland, the Beauchamps, and advanced several steps a reconciliation between the duchess and me. Yet when Roseville and lady Beauchamp here jointly commissioned me to view the old abbey with a professional man, I had not an idea of finding in that old mausoleum the means of a complete triumph over her grace."

"What did you find there?" said Edward.

"You!" replied the captain.

"You talk enigmas," said Edward.

"Time will bring their solution. In the mean while we must prepare you for a visit to the duchess. You must new furnish your wardrobe. I will order the carriage, and drive you to Bond Street; for positively your appearance is too rustic to amble. The earl, you know, placed you under my direction. In this island of Calypso, London, such a Telemachus as you would be lost in an hour, without such a Mentor! I must therefore devote a few hours to you. Come, lady Beauchamp, sir Everard, signor Belloni, doctor, you must all positively be of my party, and therefore prepare."

Edward looked significantly at doctor Hoare, who had listened attentively to the captain, and said with an emphasis,

"Well, sir, what say you? ought I to trust this Mentor?—Is he a counsellor,

think you, on whom I should rely, or is he one of whom I should 'beware?'"

"My experience of mankind makes me slow in trusting," said the doctor: "but on '*this* occasion,'" continued he, with an accent which Edward understood, "I should advise you to obey him."

"Only guard your heart, Mr. Montagu, against the fascinations that may assail it, and I am sure your judgment is in no danger of erring," said lady Beauchamp.

Edward bowed; and as he looked towards the dowager, his eye caught sir Everard's. No one but Edward saw his countenance; for the captain, and Belloni, and the doctor, stood with their backs to him, and lady Beauchamp sat behind him.

"Will sir Everard," said he, "join our party?"

The baronet smiled, and looked his thanks to Edward, but at the same moment answered in a dissembled tone of contempt,

"Sir Everard feels no such inclination."

"Sir Everard then must bend his inclination to his duty," said lady Beauchamp with an air of haughty anger; "I say he will join us, Mr. Montagu."

Sir Everard made no reply; and shortly after doctor Hoare took his leave, having engaged Edward to dine in Grosvenor Square. Captain Neville and his pupil of fashion then set out on their morning tour. In the space of a few hours Neville had taken Edward to a score of tradesmen. When he stopped at a tailor's in Bond Street, expecting to be measured for a suit of clothes, what was his surprise to learn that Mr. Larolle made only coats; and that they had a dozen doors further to drive before they reached 'the first hand in the world at waistcoats, braces, and inexpressibles!' The same 'artist' who excelled in fitting a dress shoe, would have been intolerable as the manufacturer of a pair of

boots; and though Mr. Flint, the hatter, assured them, that for round walking hats, and hunting hats, there was not a superior shop in London; yet he would confess that for an opera hat Mr. Breach did certainly 'cut all the trade.'

They had arrived near home, when the captain pulled the checkstring suddenly, and exclaimed—

"I had almost forgotten. Here is an optician! You must have a quizzer."

"What is that?" said Edward.

"Oh, an eye-glass."

"I can see extremely well, captain; an eye-glass dangling at my button-hole will be perfectly useless."

"Very true, native—very true—and pray of what use is a hat under your arm? And yet you would look as naked as a Hottentot without it. Don't be so philosophical, my dear fellow; do as the rest of the world do; and leave it to such quizzes

as doctor Hoare to investigate why the world do so."

Having finished the important business on which they set out, the captain set Edward down at the earl of Roseville's, where lord Barton and doctor Hoare awaited his arrival.

CHAPTER IV.

A METAMORPHOSIS.

"PRAY did you see the person who waited here so long for me last night, and then sent a letter by captain Neville's servant?" said Edward, as he entered, to the domestic who attended the hall door of Roseville House.

"Yes, sir."

"Has he been here this morning?"

"No, sir."

"Did he say that he would call again?"

"No, sir. He did not speak at all when he went away; but he gave a great sigh, and seemed in distress. I take it he wants relief of the family, poor old gentleman; for it seems he has known better days formerly, when he used to visit my lady."

"What makes you think so?"

" Why, sir, when he came and said he must wait to see you, sir, I showed him into that little room to the right; so he staid there a few minutes, when out he bounces in a terrible agitation, and taking hold of my hand (his own was all of a cold sweat), he says, 'I beg your pardon, my good fellow, but I could not remain in that room if my life depended on it. There is a picture hangs in that room, which so strongly reminds me of the days when I was happy, that I cannot bear to see it!' "

" What picture did he mean?" said Edward.

" There is but one in the room, sir: it is a picture of my lady, as I am told, before she was married."

Edward hurried into the apartment. It was lady Roseville's portrait. The resemblance was sufficiently strong to supersede all doubts; yet there were in the pictured face an angel smile, and a tranquil eye, which time and care had stolen away from the original. Edward gazed upon the pic-

ture; he repeated to himself the words of his supposed father—'That picture reminds me of the days when I was happy.' A hundred ideas struggled for the possession of his mind. The enmity of the stranger to lord Roseville, and his esteem for the countess;—his extraordinary behaviour and expressions at his first interview, when told of the demolition of Darlington Hall;—the danger which his father seemed to fear;—the more than benevolent kindness of lady Roseville;—the strange manner in which his first introduction to her family was accounted for:—these and similar suggestions of his memory mingled with his present feelings of surprise at the behaviour of the stranger. He closed the door of the room. He tottered to a chair, still fixing his eye upon the portrait. His heart felt confined in his bosom, and he could not help exclaiming aloud,

"O God, is it not possible I contemplate the face of my mother! Yes!—yes!—I

feel as by inspiration,—all at once I feel my fate disclosed. I am the child of love, but not of law!—Hold, hold, my impious fancy.—Lord Roseville's heir, lord Roseville's lovely daughter, are my seniors in age; and I am accusing an angel of——"

The door opened.

"Alone, Montagu?" said lord Barton; "I thought I heard you talking. Don't let me interrupt your private addresses to my mother, for I see you have no other company. Or perhaps you were practising your maiden speech in parliament, and making an eloquent defence of the whole *corps diplomatique* against the charges of 'the honourable gentlemen on the other side of the house.'"

This sally of his lordship gave Edward time to recover himself from the surprise of the interruption; and he was still further relieved by the appearance of doctor Hoare.

"So!" said the latter, addressing Edward, "we are likely, I find, to have as

lazy a life in London as we had at Roseville Park. I suppose lord Barton has told you that there is no prospect of a speedy trip to Lisbon: and that being the case, how will you young men employ yourselves?"

"Oh, we shall find ways and means to kill time, doctor, in this multitude of London," said lord Barton.

"And pray, my lord, at what office have you taken out a license to kill time?" said the doctor.

"Nay, now, my dear sir, no more moralizing. I am at present in excellent spirits, and will keep so, I am determined. The marquis of Hartley and I have been together the whole morning. His mother, the duchess of Belgrave, is, you know, a kind of master-key to all the gay parties in London. He has promised to introduce me today to his sisters—nice dashing girls, he says. The duchess has a sort of *Petit Trianon* at Brompton, and he means to drive me there in his barouche. He has got

a charming barouche, and four delightful grays. His mother furnishes him with every thing stylish, and he has a most exquisite taste!"

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed the doctor, "do I hear lord Barton? Why, my dear lord, but that the customs of the English are changed since the days of Falstaff and prince Hal, I should suppose you had met the young marquis at the Boar's-head in Eastcheap, and had been scoring up a butt of sack this morning! Why, sir, this is not the proper cue for a secretary of legation."

"A word in your ear," said his lordship: "Do you know, I have quite changed my mind about that business since I met the marquis. He tells me that it's a sort of thing a young fellow of my expectations ought to sneeze at. 'It would be well enough,' says he, 'for a fifteenth or sixteenth son of lord Roseville; but, my dear fellow, it would be murder of the foulest

dye for a fellow of your spirit, with such an exchequer as your dad possesses, for you, an only son, to turn engrossing clerk, and copy a parcel of humdrum dispatches.' "

"And did your lordship listen to this rattling nonsense?"

"'Faith, doctor, it is real good sense, and sound perfect truth. Why, he pointed out to me three of my old schoolfellows at Eton, who were very clever, and cut a splash in the "Microcosm," who have pined and fretted themselves almost into consumptions with diplomacy: but then, you know, they were geniuses without a penny of fortune; so it might do for them as well as a worse thing; as it might for Mr. Montagu here. But not a word to my father of this. There 'll be no occasion, I'm sure, to quarrel with him about it; because lord H—— told me that he did not think his appointment would take place before spring, if it did at all. And so we have got the whole winter before us to manœuvre in."

Edward was dumb with astonishment. Nothing in the Metamorphoses of Ovid struck him as more miraculous than this change in lord Barton. He looked with an expressive surprise at the doctor, and the doctor at him.

A thundering knock at the doors was replied to by lord Barton, with,

"Here's Hartley—Good bye—I shall dine out."

From the window Edward and the doctor beheld unobserved this young sprig of fashion. He was about nineteen years old, not very manly in his person, which was thus adorned: a pair of boots wrinkled half down his legs, disclosed his white stockings; inexpressibles of brown kerseymere, buttoned in the front of his knee, rose nearly to his arm-pits; three or four striped waistcoats the size of a lady's pair of stays, were surmounted by a sort of Turkish turban, worn round the neck instead of the head, which was concealed by a slouched hat, that

nearly met the corners of the shirt collar, which shaded his ears. His outer garment was a jockey frock. Thus disguised, the marquis was seated on the dickey of the barouche, holding four in hand in a masterly style. Two grooms on horseback were at the horses' heads; on the box with the marquis sat a stout man, whom Edward recognised as one of the party at lady Beauchamp's *petit souper*; but the body of the carriage, which in shape resembled a hearse, was empty.

"In the name of wonder," exclaimed Edward, "can this be the costume of a young nobleman?"

"Yes, that's the morning dress of a marquis!"

"And who is he on the box with him?"

"Guess!" said the doctor. "Who would you suppose, now, to be the companion of a young nobleman? You perceive he is a man of some notoriety; he attracts the at-

tention of the populace more than the marquis."

"He is, I suppose, some public character then?"

"You are right—He is a very striking character—for he has fought many pitched battles, and has given public lessons on the refined art of boxing. See, the marquis is introducing the bruiser to the son of an earl. They shake hands: now they dispute politely for the seat of honour: the marquis arranges it: he himself keeps the box, the pugilist descends, and cheek by jowl he and the young lord are driven through the streets by the son of a duke. O for the pen of a Juvenal!"

"I am most of all astonished, sir," said Edward, "at the conduct of lord Barton."

The doctor sighed. He placed his hands behind him, and, with his head cast down, walked silently about the room. Then seating himself in a chair—

"Well, sir," said he, "and what are you going to do with yourself?"

"I wish you would have the goodness to point out to me, in a situation so new, the most profitable way of disposing of my time, sir, until the earl arrives."

"Is it altogether natural for a youth of one- or two-and-twenty to pay such implicit deference to an old fellow of threescore?"

"My habits, sir, may as little merit praise as those on which you have bestowed your censure; but, believe me, I do not affect propensities which I have not, nor have I designedly concealed any that I have."

"And yet, sir, in London, yours will be considered as a made-up character. People who are unacquainted with the extraordinary combination of circumstances that have formed you what you are, will certainly set you down for a hypocrite, unless you actually become one, and affect some few fashionable vices which you have not."

"If I understand you then, I must study

duplicity to acquire any pretensions to integrity?"

"It is done every day. Half the follies in which the young men of this age, and every age I suppose, indulge, are neither the offspring of their own weakness or vice. The race-course of these animals is marked out for them, and whoever refuses to run it is esteemed a fool or a hypocrite; and thus it is that so many belie their own taste, feelings, and opinions, by following the actions of others. Had lord Barton, for instance, continued under the influence of his father's, and the few other examples he has yet seen, he would have copied them with the same servility as he now will others. But I foresaw that in London he would experience the want of any originality of mind, and that, unless he was quickly engaged in some serious pursuit, he could not be kept out of the race I have described. Should the postponement of his employment abroad keep him here but one winter, the result,

I doubt not, will be, that lord Barton will become, if not as vicious, at least as frivolous, as any other lord within the vortex of fashion. But I am talking to you as freely as if you had been my sworn secretary, instead of secretary elect to my *quondam* pupil. How is it, sir, that you have thus insinuated yourself into my confidence? I declare I never meant it. You have some how or other stolen into my affections, and, notwithstanding the disparity of our years, I feel more pleasure and less reserve in your society than in that of any man I have ever known since the unfortunate death of a worthy friend who bore the same name as your own, and in honour of whose memory, indeed, lady Roseville has so called you."

"What did you say, sir?" said Edward: "was there ever, then, a real Edward Montagu?"

"Ask the amiable original of that portrait (pointing to lady Roseville's picture)

that question, and tears of the most heart-felt tenderness will be her eloquent reply."

"Sir!—sir!—how?—tenderness!—I beg your pardon, sir; I am to blame."

"For what?"

"For daring to indulge thoughts which —I beg your pardon."

"I don't understand you," said Dr. Hoare, surprised in his turn: "your thoughts, whatever they may be, you have not yet expressed; but this is not the first time I have remarked the natural bursts of an ingenuous mind through a reserve that I am sure is painful to you. I have no claim, certainly, upon your confidence, except such as may be due to a sincere wish for your welfare."

"Oh, sir, you pain me by this kindness," interrupted Edward: "pray, think no more of it."

"Of what?"

"Of—Montagu!—I mean—of Lady"—

"How hard it is for a noble spirit to

wear disguise! Some idea has arisen in your mind from my mention of lady Roseville in connexion with my old friend Montagu. It is an idea unworthy of your character, I perceive; and, though not uttered by your tongue, the pure spirit that animates every lineament of your face has betrayed it in your own despite."

"Good heavens, sir!—Surely—"

"No more evasion, young man: the thought was involuntary, and perhaps the error was natural. Thus far there is nothing to be ashamed of. I rejoice, indeed, that you have betrayed your mistake, since it enables me to correct it. Most seriously, most earnestly, then, let me impress upon you this important truth—a truth of which I am as positively convinced as that I exist—Believe me, that in lady Roseville you have found the most disinterested benefactress: I blush for you while I feel it necessary most plainly to say, that you have no more

affinity with that most pure of mortals than with all the living daughters of Eve."

Edward's face was flushed with shame, and he bent down his head abashed. The doctor saw his pain: without noticing it, however, which he knew would only increase it, he continued, altering his voice from the most grave and impressive to a familiar and indifferent tone—

"The Edward Montagu, of whom I spoke, was more than forty years older than miss Darlington, when that portrait of her was painted. I remember its being brought down to Darlington Hall: it was hung up in the little parlour, I recollect, the very night before Montagu and sir Alfred Beauchamp set off for the continent."

"Sir Alfred Beauchamp!" exclaimed Edward.

"Yes: that noble youth was then under the guardianship of lady Roseville's father. Mr. Montagu was his preceptor, as he had

been that of miss Darlington, of her father, and of myself. They took leave of us amidst our tears—prophetic tears!—for we never saw them more. Had the murderer's poniard spared them, your benefactress would have been a Beauchamp, not a Roseville!"

"Dear sir," said Edward, "how much I am obliged by this kindness—this confidence! In all the many conversations I have held with the venerable old steward at Beauchamp Abbey, he has ever evaded this part of the family history."

"I know his motives: his faithful attachment to the family caused him to throw a veil over suspicions that the rest of the world will for ever indulge."

[Here Dr. Hoare related the adventures of the two Beauchamps and Mr. Montagu, at Florence.]

Edward listened with eager attention to the doctor's narrative. Every sentence interested him; but when the name of signora

Belloni was repeated, the caution which he had the preceding evening received—'Beware the syren Beauchamp! beware the monk Belloni!'—rung in his ears, and he started with an involuntary expression of horror and surprise.

"I much fear, sir," said he, "there is something wrong! These Bellonis cannot be innocent. But is it not wonderful, sir, no pains were ever taken to bring to light so foul a deed?"

"That which is every one's affair is no one's," replied the doctor. "In a foreign country, in a city where they had not even an acquaintance but the man they travelled to embrace, who were to interest themselves in behalf of the unhappy baronet and his friend, if a brother did not? The bodies were found, and were interred: the survivor and successor followed the mangled corpses to the grave; and then espoused the Italian woman now styled lady Beauchamp!"

" Did they then visit England ?"

" No ; they continued to reside at Florence for a considerable time. They then repaired to Paris, where they lived in a style of extravagant dissipation that soon exhausted all that accumulation of property with which the excellent father of lady Roseville had flattered himself to restore the genuine splendour of the house of Beauchamp. He did not live to see the ruin ; but in a few years the last guinea that could be raised in England upon the estate was squandered away in Paris. Suddenly sir Everard and his lady vanished from that city, and were heard of no more till the death of the unworthy baronet was announced to have taken place in Switzerland. For some time no claim on the estates of her husband was made by the widow ; but at length this signor Belloni, her uncle, who was then for the first time heard of, arrived in London, with an account that the dowager had been left pregnant, and that a son and

heir to the late baronet had been born at Basle, and baptized in the Protestant faith by the name of Everard, in honour of his departed sire."

"All is not right in this business," said Edward with earnestness: "have you ever conversed with this unhappy youth?"

"Only once or twice: we came over in the same packet; but lady Roseville felt so much horror in the company of the mother, that we avoided them as much as possible."

"I am most warmly interested in this story, sir; I feel, I scarcely know why, a heartfelt veneration for the name of Beauchamp, and am zealous for the honour of the family. The old Abbey and its venerable domestic were the first objects which impressed my fancy, and they warmed my mind almost to enthusiasm."

"It is a pity," said the doctor, smiling, "that there is not some wronged female orphan of this old Abbey, in whose behalf

such a knight-errant might break a lance. But come, we must descend from our romantic flights, and recollect our real characters and situations. I am called Dr. Hoare, an old fellow who has seen the world, and is not unwilling to communicate what he has seen, for the benefit of others; and you are a young man, to whom even London is new. We will, therefore, if you please, take an early dinner, and avail ourselves afterwards of the opportunity of being our own masters to visit one of the theatres in a sober style; a privilege which we shall not be indulged with when our fashionables arrive.

CHAPTER V.

COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE.

"TO Covent-Garden Theatre," said doctor Hoare to the servant who put up the step of the hackney-coach into which he followed Edward. "Now am I about to enjoy a treat," continued he, "which has long been denied me. It is many years since, in a snug corner of the pit, I was present at the first representation of a new play. It is impossible to convey an idea of the pleasure I experience on such occasions, when the author is not so unfortunate as to meet with damnation, which will not, I trust, be the case tonight; though this time last year I understand he was for the first time unsuccessful in his attempt to amuse."

They were set down in Bow-Street,

where a crowd of people were already assembled, waiting for the opening of the doors.

"Will you venture in this crowd, sir?" said Edward.

"Will I?" replied the doctor, buttoning up his coat, and preparing for a squeeze. "Will I?" repeated he, with a species of enthusiasm: "Zounds, man! I have stood at the doors of the theatre three hours, for the sake of seeing a new play, before now; and have elbowed my way as well as the stoutest among them! Come, you have only to stand close, and take care to keep your arms down, and your elbows a little to the right and left of you; and mind, when the doors open, don't go near the wall, but keep in the middle of the stream."

In a few minutes the doors were opened; and the ears of Edward were terrified with the following outcries: "Stand back! Stand back! Take care of your pockets! Don't squeeze so, sir! You 'll kill this lady,

sir, she's fainted! O Lord, my arm's broke! Sir, you 're no gentleman, to shove so! Ma'am, this gentleman pushes me!"

The novice, in such a scene, was actually alarmed, and could scarcely believe his guide that all this vociferation was excited simply by the impatience of the crowd to obtain admission.

At length, however, they entered the theatre, where all these alarming exclamations were exchanged for smiling faces, with the exception of one or two country young lasses, who bewailed the demolition of various articles of finery; having ignorantly attired themselves in box dresses to scramble into the pit.

The eyes of Edward had now ample employment: they were first directed by his ears to the high regions assigned to that part of the audience called the "gods," namely, the galleries, where a loud confusion of voices of all tones, and in all keys, accompanied by cat-calls and whistles, were calling out,

"Jones, where are you? Wilson! Jerry! Jem! Here! Come up! Where's Sal? Here—come down!" Doxies were screaming for their sweethearts, and 'prentices roaring for the companions of their toils and pleasures.

Doctor Hoare had taken his old station, on the first row of the pit; and while Edward was gazing at the gods, the doctor was leaning his back against the orchestra, and adjusting the position of his wig after the disorders of the crowd.

"What an uproar they make there!" said Edward.

"Oh, it's quite shocking!" said the fat wife of a tallow-chandler from Bishopsgate-Street, who had been treated to the play by a wine-merchant's clerk, who lodged in her first floor. "It's quite a nuisance to respectable people, as comes to hear a play. I thinks it would be a good thing if there vas n't no galleries at all!"

"'Pon my vurd, ma'rm," said her cicis-

beo, " that's vat I calls a good highdeer. Such low people might go to Hashley's, and such has that there, you know."

" Do you know, Montagu," said the doctor, as he leaned his arms on his stick, looking towards the galleries, and without seeming to have heard the polite effusions of his neighbours;—" do you know, my heart glows with rapture at witnessing once again the noisy happiness and freedom of my countrymen! On no other spot of the globe that I have travelled is there such a spectacle as that. Visit a foreign theatre, and you will find, I grant, the utmost decorum—but 'tis the decorum of children at school, maintained by the terror of punishment; for there you, as an Englishman, would be shocked at the sight of soldiers armed amongst their fellow citizens assembled for the purposes of pleasure and amusement, enforcing order by the point of the bayonet."

" Oh, infinitely better is it," said an old

gentleman who sat on the next seat to the doctor, "that we should have our heads pelted now and then with the rind of an orange, than that our lives should be exposed to the malice or mistake of some hot grenadier;—better too that occasionally our nerves are a little irritated by noise, than that the rude or even riotous jollity of British freedom should be changed to the servile silence or effeminate decency of an enslaved people."

"I should know that voice," said doctor Hoare, "and something of that face too; though it is some years now——"

"Bless me!" said the other, "can it be?—Do I see Jonathan Hoare?—What, have you forgotten Sam Ogilvy?"

"My dear fellow! why, this is an encounter indeed. Dear Ogilvy, I must take your hand, though in public. Here, come take this seat—(making room on the first row)—How happy I am to see you alive and hearty! Why, how many years have

elapsed since we were together at the theatre?"

"Fifteen at least," said Ogilvy.

"Mr. Montagu," said the doctor, "I beg your pardon. This is Mr. Ogilvy, one of my oldest friends; and the meeting will be no less beneficial to you than it is delightful to me; that is, if Ogilvy be the same Ogilvy he was fifteen years ago, for he was then a sort of walking guide to the literary world: eh, Sam, is it so now, eh? So, our old friend Ralph is dead at last, after having been Lord of Literature, as one may say, these fifty years. Jolly to the last, I'm told. Many a beef-steak have we devoured together at Dolly's. Well, he did not live in vain; for he was the original designer, you must know, Montagu, of reviews, which have essentially served the cause of literature; and though occasionally the office of a reviewer be abused, yet, like the uproariness of our gallery gods, the rudeness of these rogues must perhaps

be tolerated, if we would retain the liberty of the press. But we must reserve your budget of literary news, Ogilvy, till another opportunity. This gentleman (pointing to Edward), be it known to you, is now for the first time in his life at a play.—He has been in London but a couple of days."

"I think then," said Ogilvy, "you ought for the first time to have treated him with a real play—something of Shakespeare's—something worthy the name of a drama."

"Psha, Ogilvy! I see you retain your old prejudices for the antients, eh? Many a tough argument have you and I had on that topic. What, you still stickle for the Augustan age of literature, eh? The present times produce nothing but trash. Oh, cant! cant! sheer cant, Ogilvy: I was in hopes you had left it off ere this."

"See the nonsense which will be represented on these boards tonight, and then judge if the taste of our times be not a de-

generate one.—Nay, I will leave it to the unprejudiced opinion of your young friend."

"I have certainly," said Edward, "received great, I may say sublime, pleasure from the dramas of Shakespeare in the closet."

"But, sir," interrupted Ogilvy, "you can have no conception of the effect of those divine scenes in representation, unless you are so fortunate as to see the characters of our great bard embodied, as it were, by the wonderful powers of a Kemble or a Siddons."

"But, Ogilvy," said the doctor archly, "that would not do, you know; for surely the art of acting degenerates like every thing else, and he couldn't see Garrick or Cibber, you know."

"Why, I will concede a point in favour of our great actress Siddons; I must confess, I think she never was excelled."

Here their conversation was interrupted,

for a few minutes, by the ascent of the musicians from beneath the stage into the orchestra, who stunned the musical ear, and shocked the taste of Edward by their slovenly execution of what is termed "the first music;" which, being performed about half an hour before the commencement of the play, is always accompanied by the discord arising from a noisy gallery, the opening and shutting of the box doors, and the vociferating voices of box-keepers announcing the names of parties coming to their places; and therefore is altogether disregarded by the performers as well as audience.

By this time the pit was crowded to an overflow, as well as every part of the boxes not reserved for company.

"Are the theatres generally as well attended as this is tonight?" said Edward.

"They are scarcely ever so crowded as on the first night of a play," replied Ogilvy.

"The love of novelty, I suppose?" said Edward.

"This particular species of novelty has many constant votaries," said Ogilvy; "I could now point out to you, I dare say, nearly a hundred faces, which are always to be seen at the theatre on these occasions."

"And these occasions occur now, Ogilvy," said the doctor, "at least ten times as often as they used to do twenty years ago."

"That would be all very well," said Ogilvy, "if they repaid the trouble of coming now as well as they did then."

"Again at your old trick of abusing the present age, Ogilvy. Let me tell you, modern genius is too much decried. Though I have been absent from England, I have been no stranger to English literature; and though I will own that the works of our reigning dramatists have not my unqualified approbation, yet, besides making due allowance for the difference of effect in the closet

and on the stage, I have met with much to admire in point of plot, of character, of sentiment, and of genuine broad humour, if not of wit. Where, for instance, among the works of your favourite dead, will you find me a more lively, yet just, delineation of nature than in the Farmer Ashfield of Morton, or the Job Thornberry of Colman? Match me, if you can, the original eccentricity of our author of tonight, as displayed in his Vapid!"

"O monstrous! Reynolds is nothing but a downright caricaturist."

"I see, Ogilvy, you are still a closet-man. Why, my friend, if an author professes to sketch the manners of the times, and if the prominent characters and prominent follies of the day be, as they certainly are, caricatures of nature, blame the subjects if you will, but the artist who makes us laugh by his copies of them deserves praise for the happy dexterity of his pencil."

Edward's attention was divided between listening to this dialogue, and surveying the novel spectacle of the interior of a London theatre. The blaze of beauty that now filled the circle of boxes was enchanting; and his eye roved from object to object with delight. Presently, however, one box claimed his fixed observation; and he interrupted the conversation of the two critics, by pointing out to the doctor the Beauchamp family, attended by captain Neville; and in the adjoining box the doctor observed the duchess of Belgrave and her lovely daughters.

Lady Beauchamp, whose arms were remarkable for their beauty, sat in front, reclining her head upon her hand, for the purpose of exhibiting the said beautiful and brilliantly ornamented arm. Beside her sat Neville; and next to her was a lady unknown to Edward by name, but who was one of the *petit souper* party. Belloni and the melancholy sir Everard sat behind them.

One of the amusements of the company

in the pit, to pass away the hour previous to the play, and the pauses between the acts, is to conjecture or inquire, or, if they happen to know, to point out to their neighbours, various public characters in the boxes. On the second row, close to Edward, there sat a stout short man, with a flaxen scratch, whose dress and manner by no means indicated that he was on visiting terms with dukes and duchesses, but whose universal knowledge of the persons and history of every noble family in the house, clearly evinced to Edward that he was no inconsiderable personage. He was right in his conjecture—for he was an officer of police.

It so happened, that the knowledge which this little man's head contained was copiously drawn off, in the hearing of Edward, by the curiosity of a female in company with him.

"Who is that lady in the pink turban? Who is that queer-looking old gentleman with the little beaver hat on?" and many

other questions of the same kind, were disposed of; when at length the inquirer, in her tour round the lower tier of boxes, came to that which contained the Beauchamp party.

"But, pray tell me," said she, pointing to lady Beauchamp, "do you know who that lady with the beautiful diamond bracelets is?"

"She goes by the name of lady Beauchamp," replied the oracle. "She's lately come over from some foreign parts abroad. That chap with the great coat on, muffled up to the chin, behind her, was a sort of monkish priest in some Roman catholickish nunnery. He goes for her uncle; but that's a hum, you must know. The young fellow next to him is sir Everard Beauchamp, the son of that foreign woman, as they say, by one of our English *barrow-nights*; but that's another flam, in my mind. Howsever, I shall soon stag who they are.—I've had my doubts this week or two, ever since their

connection with that noted one, on t' other side the flashy captain Neville."

"And who is she?"

"She?—Why, that's the noted lady ——, she's the first of female gamblers; and her husband's one of the oldest swindlers we have to look after."

"La!" said the lady, "and to have the impudence to show her face in public! And to be sure, as the saying is, you may know folks by the company they keep; and so, I dare say that lady Beauchamp is as great a gambler as she?"

"That's not the worst.—But I shall soon twig her ladyship, if lady she be. I've a little bit of a trap for her, and the flashy spark beside her. I shall soon see what makes him take her in tow; for she, nor her uncle, nor the young one neither, would ever have been noticed, even by your doubtful ones, if he had not contrived it."

"And what is he then?"

"He?—Why, he is one of your cheap-

living boys. He hasn't a penny of fortune; and yet there isn't never a rout, nor *grand-to-do* any where, but some-how or other his nose is to be seen there. He hires a flashy carriage by the year, and contrives to pay a few servants; and he has a knack of worming himself into the confidence of your younker sprigs of quality; and under pretence of helping them out of their hobbles and scrapes, he helps the flats out of their Spanish, which keeps him in pocket-money."

Hitherto the ears of Edward had lost no word. He suffered the doctor and his friend to chat upon old affairs; till the ringing of the bell summoned the re-appearance of the musicians in the orchestra, who had not played three bars ere the curtain drew up, and Mr. Murray entered to speak the prologue. That judicious performer was received with a boisterous applause, which at once denoted the unanimous good humour of the audience, and foretold the success of the piece. Edward's attention during the repre-

sentation of the comedy was riveted to the stage: the interesting manner of Kemble, in the character of a rustic, though not within the general line of his performances, gave a stamp of reality to the scene; the whimsicality of Fawcett enlivened it; and the talents of the performers in general were so laudably exerted to embody the design of the author, that the novice entered with all the enthusiasm of his nature into the delusion of the drama. The plot, which turned on the substitution of a child stolen from its parents for another which had died, came so home to his own situation, that he paid the tribute of his tears as well as his smiles to the powers of the author.

Between the acts, however, instead of offering to his companions any remarks himself, or attending to their critical observations, his ear took a direction towards the little man in the flaxen scratch, whose sharp eye flew round the theatre with a hawk-like swiftness.

Nothing further dropped from the lips of

this gentleman, which challenged particular attention, until the end of the fourth act, when his companion said, loud enough to be heard by Edward,

"La!—How familiar the duchess of Belgrave talks to that there captain!"

"Yes—so she does;" said the other. "Why, queer me, how's that? They used to be at daggers drawn. Who's that youngster he is introducing to her and her daughter?" continued he, rubbing his eye-glass with the corner of his cravat. "Oh, by the lord Harry, I see—Why, that there's the son and heir of this here monstrous rich family that's to cut 'em all out this season—that's lord Barton—I twigged him this morning going into lord H——'s office, as I was a-waiting in the lobby for the Russian ambassador, about a bit of swindling business. Now, if I ha'n't up to the gig at once, I'm a raw one. Have n't you read in the newspapers a good deal about one Mr. *Mountagu?*"

Edward trembled.

"What, about a young man that was found when a baby, and brought up by lord Roseville! and how he grew up to be so handsome and clever, and saved the life of a beautiful young lady!—Oh, yes, and a very *pathetical* story it was: but I didn't know it was true."

Edward supported himself by grasping the iron spikes that are placed to prevent intrusion into the orchestra.

"O yes, it's true enough; and I now begin to smell a rat. Master Neville thinks himself d——d clever; but he won't diddle me so easily as he thinks for. I see now what Jasper, his footman, was tramping so late last night to the newspaper-office about. Poor duchess of Belgrave! what a pity she should be such a flat! Now will that fellow Neville make her believe that he has been the means of introducing her grace and her daughters to the rich Roseville family; when I saw her own son driving lord Barton and Big Jacky, the boxer, down Pall Mall this

very morning. You see that's the way he goes on. Why, I had it from Saunders, his own valet, that he knew nothing at all of these Beauchamp people till just as they left some outlandish place abroad, when he undertook to get 'em into the first company here. Old Nick stood his friend; and in the same packet they sailed to England in, there came over the earl of Roseville and family. He soon learnt that the earl wanted the Beauchamp estate in the North, which joins his own; and he put his wits to work, and got the thing agreed to in a crack. Transit the auctioneer and he galloped down to the North, fixed a price, and now he makes both families believe that he has done them the greatest favour in the world by introducing them to each other. Saunders told me this morning, that when they went down the last time to Cumberland, they found this *Mowntagu* such a favourite with lord Roseville, that it is whispered he must be a bit of a by-blow. However that is,

Neville had art enough to get the care of him, brings him up to London, takes him to Beauchamp's last night, and whips off Jerry to get it in the papers, that he and this Mr. Mowntagu are arrived together."

"And what will he make of that?"

"Oh, we who sees high life, Kitty, is up to that gossip. Why, child, this is the go —This Roseville family will be the very tippy all the winter; and there is not a wife or daughter of a duke or lord in London, but what would give their little finger to be at their *grand-to-dos*. Why, I'm engaged already at ten guineas a night to go whenever I'm wanted; except when on Royal duty, you know;—dam'me, I will sarve my king first, lose what I will by it. Now, if that flashy captain can make the town believe that he has influence with the Roseville family, he may lay all London under contribution, and that's what he's after; but he can't diddle me."

The curtain now drew up to the last act of the play, which concluded amidst shouts of approbation and applause.

The hour being late, as is usual on the night of a first representation, Edward and his companions quitted the theatre as soon as the epilogue had been delivered.

As they made their way out, the doctor took an opportunity to whisper in the ear of Edward, that he had overheard a considerable part of the conversation to which he had been listening; "but of that," said he, "more anon."

"Well, sir," said Mr. Ogilvy, as he was tying a silk handkerchief round his neck in the passage of the pit, "I dare say you have been amused."

"Yes, indeed, sir," said Edward; "I could not have imagined such a perfect effect was to be produced by the dramatic art."

"Ah, sir," replied Ogilvy; "but what

is this jumble of jokes, and tricks, and sentiment, to the regular productions of the old school?—Trash, sir—trash!"

"I cannot speak from comparison, sir," said Edward, "but if I may deliver an opinion from the effect which this comedy has produced upon my mind, I must pronounce it an excellent one. I may have laughed, perhaps, at a joke, and I may have sighed at situations or sentiments, which may be condemned by the artificial rules of cold criticism; but you will pardon me if I did not check the irritation which the former occasioned, or resist the feelings which the latter excited, when you recollect that this is the first dramatic representation I have beheld. In time, sir, I doubt not I shall lose the pleasure of a spectator in the fastidiousness of a critic!"

"Well done, my young advocate!" said the doctor.

They were now in Bow-Street, where a scene which makes no impression upon the

frequenters of a theatre filled Edward with wonder. The night was dark, and in addition to the torches of a score of bare-footed little wretches, whose infant voices usually scream, "Light, your honour—Want a coach, your honour?—Coach unhired,"—on this occasion a hundred flambeaux, from powdered footmen, added to the blaze. The crashing of wheels, the trampling of horses, the oaths and exclamations of coachmen, and the voices of footmen bawling for the different carriages, altogether formed a spectacle as interesting in its kind to the observant mind of Edward, as the cause and origin of the confusion.

Mr. Ogilvy was rather infirm; Dr. Hoare had not a perfect recollection of the avenues, and Edward was totally a stranger: they therefore were impelled backwards and forwards by the crowd, until at length they found themselves thrust into the outer lobby of the boxes, where a long vista of servants was planted, through which the company

walked to their carriages as they drew up. As a place of safety, the doctor and Mr. Ogilvy retreated behind this liveried alley, until the crowd should disperse, and Edward, of course, remained with them. In a minute after they had taken their station a person at the door vociferated, "The duchess of Belgrave's carriage stops the way." The echo was repeated from staircase to staircase, till the house rung with "The duchess of Belgrave's carriage stops the way."

"O don't be after fatiguing your precious lungs now," said a tall brawny-shouldered fellow, in white and silver livery: "my lady duchess is one of the slowest creatures in a hurry you ever fell foul of."

When the former echo had ceased, a new one commenced from the interior, and proceeded to the street, of—"Captain Neville's servants!—Lady Beauchamp's servants!—Captain Neville's servants!—Lady Beauchamp's servants!"

Edward was all observation. Presently

one of the loveliest young women imaginable appeared leaning her hand on the arm of lord Barton: it was lady Susan, the eldest daughter of the duchess. They were followed by captain Neville, with the duchess herself on one arm and lady Caroline on the other.

"Hartley behaves ill in disappointing us," said the duchess: "it distresses me to give you so much trouble, my lord."

"Hartley has laid me under everlasting obligations to him, by affording me this happiness," said lord Barton.

"So, so, so!" said doctor Hoare: "the youth proceeds with rapid strides, however: well done, Neville!"

"There is not a peer in all Christendom but would envy our lot, madam," said Neville to the duchess, "and with reason, happy fellows as we are!"

"Is it the coach, Patrick?" said the duchess to the brawny footman.

"Yes sure, your grace, and it is the coach."

" Is my chariot up?" said the captain to his servant.

" Next to the duchess of Belgrave's, sir."

" To Belgrave House, then."

Away drove the two vehicles.

The next groupe that made its appearance consisted of Belloni, with sir Everard and lady Beauchamp. Vexation and disappointment sat upon the brow of the dowager; she bit her lip, she flirted her fan as she moved along. Just as they passed the concealed trio, Jerry arrived to say the carriage waited.

" Are you sure," said her ladyship, " that lord Roseville's people told you Mr. Montagu and Dr. Hoare were at this theatre?"

" Yes, my lady: and besides, I saw them myself in the pit."

" Gracious Heaven!—in the pit?" said her ladyship.

" In the pit!" echoed Belloni with a shrug of the shoulders and a grin. " I told

you," added he in a lower, yet audible, tone, "he would slip through your fingers, if once the grave doctor arrived."

"Let Neville look to it: I will not be duped with impunity," said her ladyship as they quitted the lobby.

"What does all this mean?" said Edward.

"It means mischief," said the doctor; "but we must prevent it: thanks to this friendly screen, we have overheard a little of the plot, and we must act accordingly."

The crowd had by this time dispersed, and they sallied forth from their retreat: Edward and the doctor returned to Roseville House, where the critic Ogilvy promised to pay them an early visit.

CHAPTER VI.

A VICTIM OF FASHION.

THE duchess of Belgrave was once universally envied for her beauty; and even after her personal charms had lost much of their early lustre, the elegance of her taste, the fascination of her manners, the witchery of her accomplishments, and the splendour of her rank, caused her still to shine with brilliancy as a star of the first magnitude in the hemisphere of fashion.

Of late, however, this star had rapidly declined, and seemed now fast verging below the glittering horizon into oblivion's shade: or—to use words which will perhaps be better understood by the children of an age in which money is almost synonymous with virtue, happiness, and fame,—the duchess of Belgrave "was poor."

Transplanted in the spring of life from the restraint of a nursery to the very summit of fashionable freedom, her young and lively imagination was dazzled by the sudden elevation, and the unsuspecting openness of her heart rendered her the too easy dupe of "her dear five hundred friends." Married to a man whose happiness consisted in being deemed the "jolliest among jolly fellows," conjugal felicity was quite out of the catalogue of her expectations; and she the more easily surrendered herself the victim of the world's adulation, when she discovered and felt that the heart from which she had expected homage was at once indifferent to her charms and careless of her reputation.

At the first beckon, therefore, did the lovely duchess of Belgrave trip into the maze of fashionable folly, and soon her rank, her talents, and vivacity, enabled her to lead the giddy throng with which she mingled. Enamoured of the height she had attained, and proud of the universal suf-

frages of every rank, in thus distinguishing her claims to admiration above all competitors, it is a subject for regret, for heartfelt pity, but not for wonder, that to maintain this triumph a youthful female eventually sacrificed her bosom's peace.

In the first days of profusion and extravagance, the evils of dissipation were masked by the sycophants around her with a robe of merriment. Her first pecuniary embarrassment, the inevitable consequence of unlimited expenditure, was no sooner felt, than a hundred offers of relief instantly dispelled it.

The facility with which she arose from that degradation, was the fatal cause of all the many deep and bitter humiliations into which she subsequently sunk.

At first the shame, the terror of an exhausted coffer, in her hours of solitude, suffused with burning blushes her tear-dewed cheeks, and chilled her trembling frame with fits of death-like coldness. But when

she saw a thousand pounds produced with no other trouble than the mere signature of her name, the natural feelings of innate horror were scoffed at as the phantoms of spleen, and economy and discretion were at once blotted out of the estimate of a duchess's morality.

It was thus that from day to day she proceeded in the progress of a dissipated life, aiming to supply the perpetually recurring void of an unsatisfied heart by the vapours of happiness, which pride for ever saw, and self-flattery for ever promised, but which, coldly passing over her bosom, left disappointment and regret the sole vestiges of their airy existence.

Yet still she resolved to advance. To a dread of want, to a shame of borrowing, succeeded a desperate defiance of the one, and an actually scientific practice of the other. Her extravagances begat the most urgent distresses: to remove these she was compelled to submit to the humiliating sacri-

fices of dignity and honour; to throw a veil over them, she again had recourse to new acts of dissipation and profusion, which being succeeded by increased embarrassments, her situation became desperate in the extreme.

Too proud to recede from the career of fashionable rivalship on which she had entered, her high spirit revolted at retirement; and at all hazards she rushed on with an increased ambition to outvie the most elegant in taste, and the most opulent in expense.

Yet, though dissipated in her mode of life, never did holy nun carry to a vestal grave a heart more true to her monastic vows, than was that of the duchess of Belgrave to those which she had taken at the altar; notwithstanding the loud rumours which scandal loved to echo, and which the levity of her manners, or her forced condescension to some freedoms, seemed to sanction. Nor was her heart less compassionate than chaste.

Her charities were only restrained by her poverty.

Such was the duchess of Belgrave, whose character is further illustrated in her own letters, which at the same time detail some of the events of that winter, so important in the history of Edward Montagu, in a manner most faithfully alive to the scenes described.

"TO LADY FORESTER*.

"Dear Siz,

"Being in high spirits, which I calculate will last about twenty minutes or half an hour, I am about to make your ladyship a present of them. There's a sisterly sacrifice for you!—I verily believe, if I were certain that some loving relation of mine would be as merciful to me, and send me all the scandal of London regularly, by the Edinburgh mail, I should actually muster up resolution

* This lady, with her husband, and two daughters, had retired to Scotland to retrieve a fortune which had been injured by extravagance.

to migrate myself, and be satisfied with looking at the world through 'the peep-hole of retreat,' as Cowper expresses it.

"Without such an amusement, your most misanthropic recluse would come back to the world again. For what constitutes the delight of the wise ones in retirement but laughing at the follies of the world? Luckily for you, my dear, you need not despair of entertainment, for I foresee a most plentiful supply of fools for our diversion the ensuing season; and you have only to pray that I be seized with the *cacoethes scribendi*.

"Already are arrived that phœnix family the Rosevilles—alias the Dickenses—of whose wonderful wealth all the *city noblesse*, with whom poor I, for divers weighty and important reasons, am compelled to herd, speak in terms of most delightful envy! Ah, Cecilia! what a loss of happiness have you and I sustained, by not understanding that in this little island of shopkeepers money is the one thing needful!—Heigho!—Pray pardon

this blotted paper. I happened to lift up my head, and my eye caught my glass, which represented such a picture of the duchess of Belgrave as, if offered for sale, I would give a thousand guineas to suppress :—that is, I mean, if I could raise the sum. Imagine how I must have started at the view of my morning face with something like a tear in my eye, and a pair of lips as white as I should wish my neck to be, pummelling my poor pen to the very stump. Down it dropped on my paper—and such is the history of the blot.

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" With a new crow-quill I resume.—The SNAKE of the present day, you know, is Neville. There is no carrying on a plot without him. We have made peace, and have entered into a new treaty of alliance defensive and offensive. One of the stipulations on his part was yesterday fulfilled by a visit in form to the mansion of our London Crassus. Take a picture!—The mighty

earl himself is starch and formal, and has a vast deal of Garlick-Hill still in his physiognomy. By-the-bye, all the world knows that he is still a sleeping partner in the money-shop at Lombard-Street, though he affects to devote all his time to the study of ploughs and harrows; and I am told means to publish his late Travels, under the title of An Agricultural Survey of France, Spain, and Italy, in a hundred folio volumes. His wife is a perfect Griselda; but she really possesses attraction. She has sensibility, and at the same time a portion of sense; but she appears so extremely good, has such a tormenting appearance of self-satisfaction and tranquillity in her countenance, that I would not be alone with her for the world. The lady Emily, the rising star that the wise men of the *East* have so long foretold to the great men of the *West*, is really, after all, no paragon of beauty. She dresses well, however, and I have heard miracles of her accomplishments; but, like

mamma, the lady Emily is actually a sort of ice-cream of morality.

" There were also two Italian girls of quality, who served to swell the unmeaning group, without adding much to its variety. In short, Cecilia, one might have imagined oneself carried back to the days of one's grandmother, when miss Byrons were in vogue, but for the bewitching and provoking elegance and fashion of the inanimate parts of the scene—I mean the furniture and decorations of the ample apartments. Oh, how my wicked heart did crack commandments! for I coveted all I saw, save the souls of the poor creatures, who, in possession of that which would have filled me with raptures, seemed no more aware that they excited my envy, than if they had received me in a hovel on Salisbury plain. Not a thing could I see that was not stamped with that infallible sign of novelty, the antique Egyptian model. Between envy and spleen I should certainly have expired, had my spirits not been re-

lieved by the entrance of the elegant Arberry, leading in a figure which the duke his father introduced as his cousin lady Rumble. Oh, if ever the ghost of Hogarth could have visited the earth, it would have been at that moment! Imagine, Cecilia, a tall, thin, meagre-visaged, toothless virgin, approximating, as the sapient duke most pompously announced, to her eightieth year. Her head-dress was composed of black coarse hair, twisted into the shape of snakes, which crawled as it were upon her forehead, and clung about her neck. Her hoop, her ruffles, her stomacher, and her high-heeled shoes, each point about her, the very position of her elbows, fixed in solemn state, her mincing step, her bridled neck, and her *tout ensemble*, was such an unexpected exhibition of a fine lady of *la vieille cour*, that I must have laughed outright, had not one's risible faculties been somewhat disciplined by a mixture of terror at such a spectre of the old school.

"Arberry, whose hand was honoured with the tips of her old ladyship's finger, having ambled her round the room, with most abominable malice placed her on the Ottoman next to me! I was actually frightened.

"In a minute, towards us stalked the duke, and after two or three hems, in a style truly pomposo—'Hem!—Lady Rumble, your grace, Lady Rumble ventures, after a retirement from the fashionable world of more than five-and-forty years, to visit London on the occasion of my son's approaching nuptials, of which no doubt your grace has heard.'

"'Five-and-forty years!' exclaimed I.

"'More, more, cousin; more than five-and-forty,' mumbled her ladyship: 'for I remember the last time I appeared in public was on the happy occasion of his present majesty's coronation. I attended your mother, cousin, the duchess of Delaware, who walked, I remember, third in the procession.

She had on, your grace,' turning to me, 'the most charming brocade embroidered in gold, that ever was seen at court. I recollect too that it was made by mademoiselle Du Rouveray, who then resided in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden; and a prodigious run she had at that time of day; but fashions have altered since the coronation.'

"'There is some variation, certainly,' said I.

"'Oh! a perfect revolution in the article of dress,' said Arberry; 'but lady Rumble is not so fickle as the age. She does not throw aside a robe or a *tête* that becomes her, merely because one of another shape has since been invented.'

"'Am I to consider you as the old woman's advocate, or are you laughing at her expense, my satirical young cousin?'

"I had not given the old lady credit for so much discernment; but she rose still higher in my estimation by subsequent remarks; and I began to call myself to task

for the haste with which I had decided on her character from appearances.

" By this time Neville, joined by the marquis of Hartley, and lord Barton, had entered the apartment. A significant glance from the captain declared to me the ascendancy he was gaining over the heir of the man of wealth. This, let me whisper to you, is the main spring of my plot. Plot?—Heavens and earth, Cecilia, do I live to write it?—a plot—a plan to pilfer—to allure to play—and then to plunder!—Ah, if I should happen to look up again!—Hold! I will shut my eyes, and turn the glass down on my toilette, lest I should see a fiend!

* * * * * * * *

" I had walked thrice round my boudoir with folded arms, endeavouring to calm some turbulent sensations that just then seized me. ' I will not do this,' said I: ' No, no, Belgrave, perish first.'

" At that moment Atkinson burst into the room—' O, my lady, that ill-looking,

Jew-looking fellow is below, and is making a most terrible rout about the remainder of the money due on some nasty ugly note or other. He says he has given value for it, and will have value in return. Though I'm sure I have seen five hundred people on such errands here, I never saw such a dirty-looking wretch, or one so savage as this chap: I wonder the porter admitted him even into the yard.'

"'Oh, Atkinson, it was my order; I must see him!'

"'See him!—Will your grace demean yourself to speak to him?—La! I don't think it's safe to be a minute in his presence. Do n't go, your grace!—I 'll say you 're out—you 're ill.'

"'If you could say that I were dead, 't were well, Atkinson; but as it is, I must see him.'

"I need not detail, Cecilia, the scene that followed. You have read or heard too many of the kind. He was, in fact, the

worst I ever had to deal with. Immediate disgrace seemed inevitable. The sum due to him, and promised on that day, was two hundred. I had but five-and-twenty in the world. This I was reduced to offer him in part. He saw my poverty:—he grinned:—he chattered something between his horrid teeth, that terrified me almost to distraction. I would have almost entered into the same engagement as the renowned Faustus did, to have seen him leave the room. Just then Patrick entered with a letter. It was from Neville, and contained three bank-notes for one hundred each, and these few words:—'If you retain these, I shall consider the contract settled.—If you repent, return them by the bearer instantly. After tonight there is no retreat.'

"'Say there is no answer,' said I to Patrick.

"And then, scarcely waiting till he had left the room, I threw down upon the carpet two of the notes, exclaiming, 'There is

your demand; take them, and quit the house.'

"Now then, Cecilia, the die is cast; like Cæsar I have passed the Rubicon, and there is no retreat. I will resume my pen when I am more composed.

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"Do you recollect the pathetic manner, Cecilia, in which the Siddons delivers a passage in Isabella, 'Why should I think, when no thought brings me comfort?' I am sure all the grave ladies and gentlemen who have obliged the world with scolding lessons, from Jeremiah down to Hannah More, would be puzzled to answer the question.

"From the dull soliloquy of thought I therefore fly once more to my pen, and pursue my Shandean epistles. Let me see—I was introducing, I think, to your acquaintance, the antiquated lady Aurora Rumble. But, as I have a bird-like propensity to hop

from subject to subject, I have another sketch for your inspection, more interesting than such an autumnal leaf of mortality; a young, and a real heart, Cecilia. What the thing will become after a few weeks residence in London, I divine not yet; but at this moment I have actually in my train one of the handsomest young men of the day, who with all the polish of Arberry, with the accomplishments of the Prince himself; with the wit of Sheridan, and the learning of Parr; has, to my sagacious penetrating eye, discovered a heart spick and span new from the hands of its maker, Nature. Such a contrast is this said heart to the hackneyed, second-hand, vamped-up hearts one meets with in common, that the difference is as striking between that of the best among them, and Edward Montagu's, as between the new dress which Le Brun is now making for my daughter Caroline, and the stiff brocade of lady Aurora Rumble. You

must have read an account of this animal in the newspapers; 'how he saved the life of lady Emily Roseville, and all that.'

"For what fate such an uncommon creature is reserved, Heaven knows. I first saw him at lady Beauchamp's. Apropos of this Beauchamp—I want your advice. Neville is laboriously endeavouring to bring about a sort of alliance between her Italian ladyship and your humble servant, for this winter's campaign. I cannot, however, so soon bring myself to consider Neville as my disinterested friend; independently of which, I really do not like the foreigner. You will not set me down, I know, as a votary of false delicacy; but if you were to hear the *very dashing audaciousness* of the Beauchamp, notwithstanding all that has been sung or said in the hearing of us both, I verily believe, Cecilia, that provided the crimson of nature can be seen through the carmine of art, you would be caught blushing in spite of all your accomplishments!

"Then over this freedom, shown only to a chosen few, she in common throws a veil of such refined and sentimental delicacy, that a stranger would conceive her to be an angel of purity. Now of all the vices with which Old Nick disfigures poor human beings, you know hypocrisy has ever appeared to me the most disgusting: I wish, however, that even this may be the worst. I suspect her of the most unnatural cruelty. Her son, sir Everard, a young man who has lately come of age, is subject to fits of melancholy, and has, I understand, once attempted his own life. This affliction doubtless calls for a constant superintendance of the unhappy youth; but the coercion and discipline with which he is tortured, appear to me proofs of an unnecessary exercise of barbarity.

"Still less than his niece do I like the signor Belloni. This Italian, though both old and ugly, can be uncommonly entertaining when he pleases; but beneath his

specious exterior I am convinced he carries the heart of a very dæmon.

" If I were a free agent, I would let these folks know that I hate them—I—But, Cecilia, they have bags full of gold, and poor I, you know——

" Pray, my dear, have you ever in all your readings met with an account what time it takes to break a heart after the first crack? I have long, you know, been subject to an unpleasant aching in that part of my mortal machine;—but, some few days ago this little tenement of sensation was beset with such an assault and battery, from the united hands of treachery and mortification, that, to tell you a truth which I would not have one else in the world even suspect, I am persuaded the breach can never be repaired.

" Now, should you happen, ' at this present reading,' to be sitting near a bubbling tea-urn, or reclining your elbow on your toilette, within the reach of your dressing-

glass, remove such dangerous articles out of the way, for you are going to start!—Know that I, who, Rolla-like, had never bent or bowed before created man, have, like him, now actually been upon my knees!—And of all the birds in the air, or beasts upon earth, to whom, think ye?—To my—yes—out it shall come, though it choak me—to my lord, and husband!

* * * * * * * *

"Atkinson, as I wrote the word, brought me my morning draught. I believe she has saved my life. She has at least given me spirits to continue my letter, and you shall judge if under existing circumstances, as Pitt would say, I can do otherwise than *coterie* with Neville and the Beauchamps. To illustrate my very comfortable situation, I must indite a story which Geoffrey Chaucer would have styled either the 'Boke of the Duchesse,' or 'The Jeweller's Tale.'

"Know then, that among the wonders of this wonderful age, I took it into my head to go

to court last drawing-room. You know who, had whispered that the duchess of Belgrave's ornaments were very prettily fancied, it was quite a pity they were not real diamonds. It so happened that our family plate had been sent four days before to Marchand's to be cleaned; and he, having and holding the said family plate, good-naturedly lent me as rich a sprig for my hair, as lovely a necklace, and as handsome a pair of bracelets, as ever were displayed at St. James's. And now to you, who are in the utmost extent and meaning of the word my confessor, to you, Cecilia, I protest, that when I entered the drawing-room, I had not the most remote idea of detaining these borrowed lustres one hour from their owner, beyond the moment of throwing off my hoop. But thou knowest that even St. Anthony himself never was buffeted by temptation with half the force that has been exhausted upon the sinner Belgrave!

"As the genius of mischief would have it, after dropping my curtsey, I happened to be

squeezed in the circle within three or four of the rich Mrs. Torrington, whose debt of two thousand guineas has visited me every night these six months, something in the shape of that fascinating figure which Fuseli calls his nightmare. Whether my borrowed splendour was too dazzling for the gaze of my city creditor, or whether some sin unknown of mine, had ruffled the six months' smooth face of this queen of Queenhithe, I know not; but I saw anger, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, issuing out at each angle of her little gray eyes. Next to me stood old dowager Beauclair. In a few minutes the wrinkles of her cheeks were put in motion, and her two remaining teeth were displayed by an angry exclamation, which, while it evinced her ladyship's tender watchfulness for the dignity of the peerage, unfortunately discovered to me that my friend Mrs. Torrington had been kindly abusing me to whoever would listen to her story.

" ' A very pretty pass the world has come

to, indeed,' said the dowager, loud enough for all the circle to hear, ' when the wife of a dealer and chapman can entertain the circle at St. James's at the expense of a duchess ! I remember the day when people of some people's extraction would have been satisfied with talking of their city wealth at a lord mayor's show, instead of elbowing nobility at court. But what with the wives and daughters of contractors, lord mayors, and volunteer colonels, one can't so much wonder at the addition of constables and peace officers to complete the mob.'

" There was certainly enough of prejudice and illiberality in the dowager's lamentation, and it had its due effect on dame Torrington, who that very morning formally demanded her debt. I had no other ways or means. In a moment of splenetic pride the jewels were dispatched by Bennet to the old place; the debt was paid, and everlasting war declared between the Belgrave and one Mrs. Torrington.

" I drove to the jeweller's, two days after, in a dashing style, but with a palpitating heart, calling on the god of eloquence for aid.

" Mr. Marchand was not at home; but if I would please to leave the jewels.

" ' I shall keep the jewels! What is their value?'

" ' Six thousand guineas.'

" They were pawned for two.

" I was dumb.—The shopman stared.—Patrick and the other footman stared. Still I was dumb.

" ' I shall keep the jewels,' repeated I, as soon as I could breathe, ' and will settle with your master—Home, Patrick!'—and drawing up the glass I threw myself back in the carriage, and I believe shed tears, or something of that kind.

" Home we drove; but ere I had thrown off my cloak, into my presence, and completely panic-struck, rushed ' the knave of diamonds.'

" ' What's the matter, Mr. Marchand?'

" ' My lady!—your grace!—For God's sake, madam, tell me truth—what have you done with the jewels?'

" ' Insolence!—How dare you ask, sir, such a question?'

" ' I have reasons for the inquiry.'

" ' I shall not answer it.'

" ' Madam, you must.'

" I was going to ring the bell. He held my hand—

" ' You will expose yourself!—I wish to prevent disgrace!'

" Just at that moment, Cecilia, conducted by my good or evil genius, I know not which, for the very first time since our marriage, my lord duke entered my dressing-room, where this scene passed.

" ' Disgrace!' said he: ' What is the meaning, sir, of such a word, used in this house, and to this lady?'

" Alas! poor I, down I sunk into a chair, and there, for all the world like the lady in

Comus, I sat as if struck dumb and motionless by enchantment.

" 'My lord duke—I—her grace—that is—it is—'

" 'Damn your delicacy, sir; leave off muttering, and let me know your business,' said my mild lord.

" 'Why, then, your grace, if the truth must out, it must!—My name is Marchand.'

" 'Your name is Marchand, is it?—Then before we go any further, pray, Mr. Marchand, what is the meaning of your damned insolence in telling my butler yesterday that there was an embargo laid upon my plate, which you have been cleaning?'

" 'My lord duke—I—'

" 'I only mean to say this, Mr. Marchand, that I shall have a grand dinner tomorrow, and that if my plate chest is not in this house tonight, damme if I don't blow your brains out!'

" 'It's about that plate, my lord duke, I am come.'

" 'Don't lord duke me, man, but speak like an English tradesman, and to the purpose.'

" Then, sir, you can't have that plate sent home till my lady duchess returns those jewels, which I lent her on the pledge of this plate.'

" 'Is that all?—For shame, Evelina! Is there never to be an end of these things?—Give the man his jewels, and let him quit my house.—Why do you sit tearing that fan to pieces?—Why don't you give the man his gewgaws?'

" 'Hem!—hem!—hem!' thrice hemmed I; and then, without moving my eyes, which were admiring the carpet, 'Mr. Marchand, will you do me the favour to leave the room, and I will explain this little affair to his grace.'

" 'I want no explanation, Evelina; mind, I tell you before her face, Mr. Jeweller, that damme if I advance one farthing on her account.'

" ' Yes, you will, my lord,' said I, ' when I tell you all the weighty reasons I have for money. But pray retire ten minutes, Mr. Marchand.'—He left the room.

" ' Now, my dear, dear duke, pray condescend to tell me to what fortunate occasion I owe the happiness of this visit? How is it, that for the first time in my life, I have the felicity of seeing, in my dressing-room, that interesting companion of the toilette, a man of rank and fashion, in the character of a husband?'

" ' Madam, madam, I am not at this time of day to be again wheedled and cajoled. The town rings with my disgrace and your extravagances. I have done, Evelina! I have done!'—So saying, he most heroically buttoned up both the pockets, into which he had before thrust his hands, in a strutting attitude.

" ' That's right, my lord,' said I, ' take care of your pockets; never mind your character!—I dare say the dinner will look as

well upon pewter as silver; and it will make an excellent joke for the guests to hear that the family plate is pawned for two thousand guineas!'

" 'I tell you, madam, I will not be laughed at in this manner!—I am not to be fleeced again by your trickeries! I see how it is!—You learnt the plate was at the jeweller's, and have taken that opportunity of getting the jewels; for you knew that without a security your name, your honour, would be no pledge for a toothpick.'

" 'Very well!—Excellent!—Bravissimo!'

" 'But I will find the baubles, madam! I will be ruled by a wife no longer! Give me the keys of that cabinet! I know they are there! I 'll break it to pieces, but I will have them!'

" 'Heyday! bashaw Bluebeard!'

" 'Give me the keys, or open the cabinet yourself.'

" 'Neither, my lord, as I am a duchess.'

" 'Damnation! I will be laughed at no

longer.'—So saying, he seized my poor China cabinet, and dashed it to pieces. The drawers flew in various directions, and nothing but cosmetics did his grace get for his pains.

" 'Cease, rude Boreas, blustering railer,' sang I.

" 'Damn your calmness. Tell me, where are these jewels, or I—'

" 'Don't threaten, and I will tell you candidly where they are, and would have told you at the beginning of this storm. They are—it's an ugly word for the lips of a duchess, but in plain truth, my lord—they are pawned for the sum of two thousand guineas. Give me a draft for that sum, and the jewels shall be returned to Marchand, and the family plate of the duke of Belgrave released from its embargo.'

" Thus far, you see, I was conqueror: now comes my humiliation, which I will try to relate as faithfully. To shorten the scene, I will pass over the gentle approaches of the

duke to tenderness and forgiveness, and begin at that part of it where, calling in Mr. Marchand, he said—

" ' Well, sir, I find you have told me an unpleasant truth !—Wait a few minutes. The jewels are sent for, and you shall have them.'

" ' I am afraid not, my lord.'

" ' How so ?' said the duke.

" ' Sir !' said I.

" ' They are at this moment in the possession of a magistrate at Bow-Street ; and I ran here almost out of breath, to prevent, if possible, an Old Bailey business.'

" ' Bow-Street ! Old Bailey !' exclaimed I : ' Is the fellow mad ?'

" Oh ! my lady ! my lady ! where is my lady ?' cried a voice I knew to be Atkinson's, and in she flew. ' Oh, good God, my lady, what shall we do ? Poor Mrs. Bennet is took up by a constable about the jewels, and they say your grace must go to Bow-Street !'

" 'Why, this does look serious!' said I.

" 'This is indeed disgrace!' said the duke.

" 'I have just come from the magistrates,' said Marchand; 'but you have detained me so long, I suppose they have sent after me!'

" The constable, as Atkinson had called him, was no less a person than Mr. G——, the magistrate, who now entered, with my trusty friend Bennet; and after a scene most delightfully confusing, he thus told his tale:

" 'These jewels, Mr. Marchand swears, are his property, lent to your grace. They were sold by this woman, Mrs. Bennet, for three thousand five hundred pounds, to a Jew in Whitechapel, as she said, on account of the duchess of Belgrave!'

" 'Impossible!' said I. 'Mrs. Bennet is indebted to me for her subsistence.'

" 'Oh, yes, your grace, for more; for my life; but yet it is too true!—I am guilty, and hanging is too good for me—though

all I have done, I have been instigated to do by the worst of men, whom it has been my ruin to have loved.'

" ' Your husband !' said I. ' Well, go on, woman; speak truth now:—it is the only way in which you can redeem me from disgrace.'

" ' I see she will confess more to your grace than I ought to hear, as a magistrate; I therefore will withdraw,' said the humane G——.

" On her knees Mrs. Bennet then related, that the abandoned man her husband had persuaded her to sell instead of pawn the diamonds; on the supposition—hear this, Cecilia—on the supposition, that I should never be able to redeem them.

" That I had authorised her to pawn the jewels, could not be denied; that the jewels were not my property, was a fact as difficult to contradict: and when the words felony and swindling were beginning to blanch the face of my poor husband, I flew

from him in despair. I ran from room to room until at length I became senseless, and sunk on the floor. When I recovered my reason, I found myself on a couch, with the poor terrified creature, who, with all his faults, has some humanity, sitting by my side.

" ' Where's Bennet ?' screamed I.

" ' On the road to Wales ; where she will remain a prisoner on our estate for life. Her husband has consented to go to America. The jewels are returned to Marchand's. The whole affair is hushed up ; so make your mind as easy as you can : but, oh, Evelina, how much more do I feel for your honour, than the loss of four thousand guineas !'

" Could you have supposed the man capable of making such a speech ?

" I started up—I threw myself at his—Yes, I—Cecilia—I—proud, unbending I, knelt to the author of so generous a sentiment ! I buried my face on his knees, and

barely articulated—'Oh, why—why—why were you not as regardful of that honour twenty-four years ago?

* * * * * * * *

"But after all, Cecilia, what can I do? Turn nun or hermitess I cannot:—this winter at least I will not. What then must I do? I cannot dig—to beg I am ashamed!—must I not then, according to the vulgar adage, borrow or steal?—Well—I must try my fortune with these Bellonis and Rosevilles!—Verily I must!—Yes; like a female Robin Hood, I must take from the rich to give to the poor!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROYAL INSTITUTION.

LADY ROSEVILLE happened to express her doubts of the propriety of returning the visits of lady Beauchamp, or even the duchess of Belgrave. The earl himself had imbibed similar sentiments, from a variety of hints, innuendos, and some round assertions, which had opened his eyes to the fading character of the latter, of which his long absence from England had till lately kept him in ignorance. No sooner, however, had the countess ventured her remark, than a revolution took place in his lordship's mind.

"Mere affectation of delicacy and decorum," said he. "Her brilliant spirits are misconstrued by envy, and her sentiments distorted by spleen. You may prefer more melancholy associates; but I have no desire

to take a seat at the Tabernacle, or to become a disciple of methodism!"

"You know best, my lord," said lady Roseville; "I only offered my opinion."

"In the regulation of my conduct, and that of my family, it were as well to reserve your opinion until it is solicited."

"The duchess of Belgrave, my lady," said a servant. "Is it your ladyship's pleasure to be at home?"

"To the duchess of Belgrave, by all means!" said the earl.

In glided her grace with the air of a sylph, followed by her two lovely daughters.

"Twenty thousand thanks, lady Roseville, for this friendly admission," said she, entering. "It was rather unreasonable to expect to be let in at this hour; but I recollected these three novices (alluding to ladies Emily, Paulina, and Selina); and having their characters very much at heart, I could not neglect the opportunity of qualifying them for one of the most prevalent topics

of fashionable conversation. There is to be a most charming lecture this morning; and I, being lady patroness for the day, am desirous to extend the benefits of the morning's instruction to as many as the place will hold."

"Now the enemies of your grace would say, that being the comet of the morning, you are desirous of having your tail as brilliant and long as possible!"

"I'll shut my eyes, and guess that speech came from doctor Hoare," said her grace.

"This talent of satire," said lord Roseville, "makes a man as independent as wealth."

"Or at least as impertinent; isn't it so, my lord? But I pray your grace's pardon."

"What lecture does your grace allude to?" said lord Roseville.

"A lecture on gauze or gossamers, your grace?" said Dr. Hoare.

"Now, cynic, be dumb," said the duchess. "Nay, be confounded, thou and all the re-

vilers of fashion! No, sir; no frivolous pursuits allure us now—neither cats, caps, crapes, nor caterpillars, are now the sport of ladies—Are you to be told, you exotic, that during your exile the sciences have burst prison? that, no longer confined within the precincts of Oxford or Cambridge, they have dashed up to Town, and opened a fashionable house in Albemarle-Street, where they see the very first company, under the protecting rays of royalty itself? Have you never heard of the Royal Institution?"

"Royal Institution!" echoed the marquis of Arberry, as he entered the breakfast-room, followed by Edward, captain Neville, and lord Barton. "Are you for the Royal Institution, ladies?"

"Even so, sir," said her grace, "and you are the very scholars we wanted, to explain the meaning of all the hard words."

"Oh, in mercy, never let such lips as these," said lord Barton, bowing to the la-

dies, " be distorted with such terms as hydrogen and oxygen, and caloric and carbonic."

" Fie, lord Barton!" said the duchess: " would you have the girls appear downright barbarians?—The chemical nomenclature will be part of the language of fashion this winter; and I shall not be surprised if it were to become as fashionable, in a short time, to construe these Egyptian hieroglyphics, as it is now to decorate our apartments with them. In that case an Egyptian master will become as necessary as a French governess."

" But can it be fashionable for young ladies to study chemistry, or attend lectures on Galvanism?"

" O yes, my lord," said doctor Hoare, " the fascination of fashion is irresistible. It wrought a miracle last winter far more wonderful than this:—It was then the rage to hear the bishop of London preach; and there was actually as great a scramble for a

pew at St. James's church, as for a box at the opera. There is nothing, therefore, which fashion may not achieve, since it has made fine ladies say their prayers."

"High noon, I declare!" said the duchess with a yawn, looking at her watch. "We shall lose the exordium."

A bustle ensued.—The gentlemen had arranged a morning lounge at Tattersall's. The duchess, however, would take them to "school," as she termed it. Carriages were ordered, and the whole party agreed to attend the lecture.

Edward was the only gentleman who had not paired off with a lady. Lord Barton had one arm of the duchess, who, looking round with an air of captivating sweetness, said, "Mr. Montagu, pray don't let this young man run away with me—do give me your arm!"

Edward bowed, and her grace held out her hand.

Looking at the profusion of superb furni-

ture, all after the antique Egyptian model, the duchess could scarcely restrain a bursting sigh: she smiled, however, and gaily observed, "What a procession we make! We seem like the children of Israel going forth out of the land of Egypt!"—alluding to the furniture and decorations.

"True," said lord Barton; "but whoever is under the same roof with your grace will never be out of the house of bondage."

"Very well for a young beginner, indeed, sir! I perceive, as Neville says, you will do very well with a little encouragement."

When the party arrived at the Institution, the rooms were crowded almost to suffocation. The lecturer was haranguing his fashionable audience on the discovery of Galvani, and explaining its principles and its uses.

Edward had promised himself some pleasure from this visit, as well as some information. In the latter, at least, he was completely disappointed. So loud was the cla-

mour of ladies' tongues, that the poor lecturer's learning and eloquence were totally wasted upon the greater part of the assembly.

"La! lady Fane! are you here?"

"So, sir Harry, you are turned philosopher!"

"Well, of all the things in the world, who should have thought of seeing that jockey, Charles Torrington, at a lecture on Galvanism!"

"Oh, my dear, he has killed so many racers, that he's half ruined in horse flesh; and so he expects, by learning Galvanism, to be able to bring his dead horses to life again."

"Now, why don't you listen, Louisa? that's a most astonishing property of the Galvanic fluid which the professor is describing."

"Dear me, Eliza, how teasing you are! You know I can read all about such things at home in Wilkinson's book; and I am

listening to a most delightful piece of scandal now, which I could not hear at home."

"No, no, madam; I tell you it was the duchess of Belgrave."

"Ma'am, I have it from authority that it was the duchess of Drinkwater. They have actually discharged sixteen of their servants, and put down no less than four carriages."

"There you're wrong again, ma'am!—Six servants and two carriages, if you please; and they do say things may be settled without selling an acre of land."

Such was the confused collision of sounds that struck the ears of Edward, instead of the scientific lecture he had anticipated.

At the upper end of the room he observed the Beauchamps and the signor Belloni. Seats were reserved for the duchess of Belgrave's party, very near them. The parties mingled.

As Edward was standing in one corner of the room, endeavouring to catch a part of the lecture, he felt his coat twitched, and

turning round saw doctor Hoare at his elbow. "Step this way," said the doctor: "yonder I see Ogilvy." Edward followed him out of the lecture-room.

"Well, my old friend," said the doctor, "what do you say to the moderns now? Here are golden times, when science is not only patronised by fashion, but when it is absolutely necessary to be scientific to be fashionable!"

"Psha!" said Ogilvy. "Science! Nonsense! The world is absolutely turned topsy-turvy, and the people are all run mad. Don't profane the name of science by associating that word with this depository of pots, pans, and potatoes. Don't call that science,

> 'That with clipp'd wing, familiar flirts away,
> In Fashion's cage, the parrot of the day:
> The sibyl of a shrine, where fops adore
> The oracle of culinary lore.'"
>
> *Shee's Rhymes on Art.*

"But, my dear Ogilvy, does not science gain at least some honour by having such a

splendid train of lovely votaries as are in the next room?"

"No:—it's a burlesque worship. There is not half a dozen among the women there who have a spark of real love for science; and that's the only consolation I feel; the bubble will burst ere the novelty is well over."

"You do not then approve, sir," said Edward, "of the dissemination of the higher branches of knowledge among the fair sex?"

"I don't approve of the present system, of making prattling philosophers in petticoats. I see no good that is to result to society from having our wives or daughters discharging electric or Galvanic batteries at our heads, or of converting our cook-maids into chemical analysers of smoke and steam."

"But are not the scientific pursuits of the present day at least as beneficial to society as the old amusements of working carpets and chair bottoms?" said doctor Hoare.

"No; they are not. The end of such

occupations was to render our homes, a word now almost obsolete, agreeable to their masters; whereas this mania of philosophy has a direct contrary tendency, converting our parlours into chemical laboratories, and our drawing-rooms into debating societies."

"But, Ogilvy, you must make some allowance for the progress of refinement, and the growth of luxury. Ladies of fashion now-a-days would faint at the sight of a tambour-frame; and at the introduction of a spinning-wheel they would actually expire!"

"I grant you, Jonathan, that there is a necessary change in the manners of the great.—As wealth increases in a state, the number of those who live without labour must increase; and still further I grant, that the increase of population, the source of that wealth, makes it a duty that the rich should not do those services for themselves, to do which forms the subsistence of the poor. I

do not, therefore, wish to see duchesses of the nineteenth century working carpets, or spinning cloth;—but, zounds, man, is there no alternative? Have they not music and dancing? Have they not drawing and poetry? Have they not the exercise of fancy and taste in all the articles of dress; and all the arrangements of routs, balls, and assemblies? Besides, I would even allow them a dip into botany and horticulture:—all this may do well enough for amusement. But let me not hear the studies of abstruse sciences called feminine amusements, and the severest labours of human intellect termed pastimes for ladies!"

"To be serious, Ogilvy," said doctor Hoare, "I feel no inclination further to contest a subject on which it is impossible there should be a difference of opinion. But, if you are not an approver of this Institution, may I ask what brings you here?"

"I have not condemned the Institution.

On the contrary, with some exceptions, I admire its plan. The avowed purpose of its establishment was 'the diffusion of knowledge, and facilitating the general introduction of useful mechanical improvements;' and had your duchesses and marchionesses contented themselves with the honour of subscribing to the expense of such an institution, I should have applauded instead of censuring their conduct. I am myself a subscriber. Their lectures I think worse than useless; their pot and kettle manufactories, and their roasting and boiling experiments, should, I conceive, have been distinct branches, entirely separated from and unconnected with the literary or scientific parts of the establishment!—An union of soup and science!—Good Heavens!—What cannot fashion do!—But you ask what brings me here? The news-room and the library. These are supplied with more than fifty periodical publications, in English,

French, and German, with all the London, and many of the foreign newspapers. Here I frequently lounge away the morning, more independently than in a private library, and more comfortably than in a public coffee-room."

CHAPTER VIII.

MODERN REVIEWERS.

THE doctor and Edward were now conducted by Ogilvy into the several apartments of the Institution, and at length seated themselves in a room where a large table was spread with reviews, magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets on a variety of subjects.

"What a wonderful increase there has been in the number of periodical publications since I left England," said the doctor to Ogilvy; "of reviews especially!"

"Reviews!" exclaimed Ogilvy. "An ounce of civet, good apothecary! Why do you lead me to the putrid shambles?"

"Putrid shambles, Ogilvy! Why, my old friend, what does this mean? I speak before Mr. Montagu with the same confidence as if we were alone.—What has hap-

pened?—When I left England you were yourself, I think, concerned in what you now call putrid shambles!"

"Sir," said Ogilvy, "I am ashamed to say that once I was a reviewer; not that I am conscious any act I ever did in that capacity merits self-reproach or shame, but I blush to own a name that modern practice has rendered almost infamous!"

"How so?" said doctor Hoare. "Human nature, we are not now to learn, is not a perfect compound; nor can we expect in any human work perfection. We have, you know, often discussed the morality of reviewing, in company with our old friend Ralph; and though friendly preferences now and then——"

"Sir, I must interrupt you:—you have been some years abroad; and you speak as if the system were now as it was in the best days of the Monthly Review. It will ruffle my temper for the rest of the day to set you to rights on this topic—but I will do it!—

In fact, I could scarcely refrain the other evening at the theatre, when you asserted that reviews had served the cause of literature.—Remember that I am a reviewer, and speak with the honest feelings of a brother upon the corruptions and errors of my family. I believe, upon the whole, that reviews have hitherto been favourable to the interests of learning and genius, and till very lately they have generally been conducted, if not with infallible justice, at least without glaring injustice, and always with a temper becoming men of letters, and in language that evinced the education and manners of gentlemen. But, now—Oh!—I could weep with vexation at the recollection of the disgrace that has been accumulated upon the critic's occupation—It harrows up my very soul to think that the qualification of a fashionable reviewer is that of a cold-blooded assassin, who will neither scruple to use the tools of a butcher, nor the language of a Billingsgate. I am aware that my feelings on this subject

may betray me into expressions which colder calculators might deem too strong for the occasion; nay, which the unfeeling might convert into subjects of most exquisite ridicule: but, sir, I never will, on this account, suppress the indignation of my heart, whenever the infamy of reviewing shall excite it."

"Again the infamy of reviewing! Ogilvy, I must remind you, this is only invective."

"To facts then," said Ogilvy. "What epithet would you assign to that conceited boy, who, intoxicated by the eulogies of his fellow collegians, or even his tutors, for an early display of florid eloquence in his themes, should presume to write treatises of condemnation upon works of long-established reputation, or on recent publications by authors of well-earned fame?"

"I should call him a conceited young coxcomb, whom time would convince of his arrogance."

"But suppose that the novelty of such censure should excite curiosity, and that a

general desire to peruse it should render it an affair of interest with some bookseller to publish it. Suppose further, that the spirit of avarice, delighted by the success of its sale, should instigate the young censor's vanity to a repetition of his mischievous sport, until the harvest of flattery and presents, with which they behold him crowned, stimulate a whole nest of young hornets to volunteer their stings also in the service of this trader in venom,—and that a Review be commenced having for its object the gratification of the worst passions of the worst of mankind, by a general ridicule and abuse of the efforts of genius, and the productions of learning—What epithet would be vile enough for such a system? Or what lamentation can be too deep for a people who fall into a snare so detestable, and nourish by their patronage a nest of vipers in their bosoms, who are poisoning the vitals of taste, truth, science, morals, and religion?"

"Monstrous supposition!" said doctor

Hoare. "My dear Ogilvy, you have become hypochondriac. Why, the sect of the *Illuminés*, supposing it to exist, is a society of angels in comparison with such a combination as that which you have imagined."

"Would to God I could think it a fable! but I feel—yes, sir, I feel its fatal effects too severely, too deeply, too everlastingly, to enjoy the pleasure of a moment's doubt."

"Nay, now you make me believe you serious, indeed, my friend. Something which you have not yet communicated—"

"You shall hear," said Ogilvy. "You recollect I had a brother who was a clergyman: fifteen years ago, much about the time that our intercourse was broken off by your absence from England, he died. He left to my charge an orphan boy of eight years old. By the interest of the late archbishop of York, I obtained an admission for him into the Charter-house school. He was a lad of considerable talents, and possessed an uncommon degree of sensibility. At six-

teen I entered him of Trinity-College, Oxford, of which his father had been formerly a fellow. Alive to fame, and zealous for academic honours, he laboured hard by night and day: a scholarship was quickly gained;—a successful prize poem was published at the university press; and a fellowship would soon have followed; when an offer was made him to undertake the tuition of the son of a minister of state. I advised his acceptance of this offer: his patron justly estimated his talents, his pupil loved and honoured him. He was now about twenty-two years old, with every future prospect fair, when unhappily a dispute arose among some of the leading men in power, relative to our colonial settlements in the West Indies. Several pamphlets were published on the occasion. Among others my nephew Charles wrote one in defence of the opinions espoused by his patron, which were also honestly his own. I perused his manuscript. I showed it to several of the best scholars, and some of the

most enlightened politicians of the age; they not only recommended, they pressed its publication. This tract had cost him much study, much labour, and much time. It appeared: it excited universal attention: the author was complimented by the first people in the kingdom who espoused the same opinions; and even they who dissented from him acknowledged the extraordinary depth of learning, and the powers of acute reasoning, which his work displayed; and candidly confessed that it ranked him, though so young a man, among the most successful writers on the science of political œconomy.—In a short time afterwards, on the cover of a review, I saw the title of my nephew's pamphlet. Knowing the quick feelings and the too lively sensibility of his nature, I anxiously turned to the article. Oh, my dear friend, never shall I forget the horror, the disgust that followed in my mind, as I perused the critici—no, it were blasphemy to call such low ribaldry, such

literary grossness, criticism!—It contained no statement of the contents of the book; it pointed out no errors of argument or fact; no blemishes of style or method; but from beginning to end it was filled with personal abuse of my poor nephew and his patron. It entered into the private history of his life; it raked up the ashes of his deceased father; it related anecdotes of a nervous complaint with which he was afflicted at college; and concluded with calling him fool, idiot, blockhead, pander, mercenary, toad-eater, and dependent.

"I was instantly struck with a dread of the effects of this assassin blow upon poor Charles. His meek nature, which would have received fair critical remonstrance, and gentlemanly reproof, with smiling patience, would, I knew, sink beneath the tomahawk of such a barbarian as the writer of the article in question. I strove to keep this accursed review from his sight, until I could prepare his mind for such an unexpected

stroke:—but some demons in human shape sent no less than ten copies of the review by post to the house of his patron. Anonymous letters, containing copies of the article, were sent to lord L——, to his son, and to my nephew. It is silly to say that a man should laugh at and despise such attacks; those least worthy of them bear them with least fortitude. His mind, of a texture too fine, too nervous to resist it, was shattered by the blow of the assassin; and for more than sixteen months, hopeless of cure, he has remained in a private mad-house, the heart-rending monument of the infamy of the modern system of reviewing!"

"Wretches!" exclaimed Edward, whose benevolent and ardent nature was aroused to indignation by the tale he had heard: "what could excite so cowardly, so murderous a blow?"

"You shall hear," said Ogilvy. "I soon obtained an introduction to the author. I found him a stripling with the mock airs of

a man of fashion! Instead of the gray hairs of experience on his head, he had scarcely the down of manhood on his chin; instead of that negligent inattention to dress which generally marks the severe student, he was the counterpart of a linen-draper's shopman; his cravat adjusted to a fold; his shoe-ties spread over his shining slippers, in the nicest order of a dancing-master; and his eye-glass dangling round his neck in all the foppery of a box-lobby lounger! I started with some surprise.—'Am I right?' said I. 'Are you the proprietor and editor of the —— Review?'

"'I have that honour, sir,' said the coxcomb, in a lisping accent.

"'And that happiness, no doubt,' said I: 'it must be the source of inexpressible gratification to you to wound the feelings of genius, and depreciate the labours of the learned!'

"'I do not precisely comprehend, sir,' said the puppy, 'the tenor of your observation; but I presume it alludes to something

that has appeared in my review, which is not perfectly agreeable.—'Pon my honour, sir, I must assure you that we mean to continue the system of severity; we find it answers. The public has latterly been surfeited with the insipid sweets of criticism; and modern reviewers, who would be read, must make a free use of the lemon.'

" ' Why, young man,' exclaimed I, more than ever surprised, ' it is not then, I find, the rash inconsiderate zeal of a venial youthful ambition, but the cold calculating spirit of gain, that has made you commence literary assassin?'

" ' That's very strong language, sir, 'pon my honour!—I should not have expected from Mr. Ogilvy such a description of a reviewer, who, as I understand, has himself——'

" ' A reviewer!' interrupted I, with scorn. ' Is there then no difference between an honest and a corrupt judge, a faithful and a perjured juryman?—A reviewer! I know reviewers whose wisdom I reverence, whose

integrity I honour: but they are veterans in literature; they are men who by experience are acquainted with the toils, the anxieties, and struggles of authorship; and who, not having seared consciences, pause to consider the effects of their labours ere they distil those acid poisons, and squeeze that lemon which you assert to be so palatable to the present taste. They act the part of honest umpires between the public and the literary claimant of public notice, and are neither swayed by venal partiality to gloss over immorality and dulness, for the purpose of imposing upon the former, nor can be induced by self-gain, to devote the feelings or the property of the latter as seasoned sacrifices to glut a popular taste so infamously vitiated as you describe it. No, sir, it was reserved for the present day to bring forth a fry of young critic imps, the mingled spawn of arrogance and envy hatched by mischief, who were to entail disgrace for ever on the word reviewer, by making it synonymous with libeller and assassin. They assumed the

shape of men, of men too in that season of human life which should resemble Nature's lovely spring, and be known by its sweets and its smiles: yes, in the shape of youths did it please these demons to practise their inhuman orgies; as if mankind could be deceived by their mere forms into a belief that the malice of a devil could be inflicted on men by a man and a brother! No, sir, no! You may proceed in your career; immolate victim on victim; pursue the ignoble occupation of tormentor-general; keep open your exhibition of tortures; grin over the collection of hopes destroyed, of fortunes injured, of feelings outraged, of intellects deranged, of hearts broken by your merry malice, or your venomous corruption; enjoy the feast infernal!—while I retire to contemplate one single victim—a nephew, whose reason has for ever fled at your accursed bidding!'

"'At mine?' said the pale, panic-struck wretch.

"'Yes, viper, yes,' said I: 'affect not to

misunderstand me.—Charles Ogilvy is a maniac at your command.—He is reduced to the most humiliating lot of man, and I to the most miserable in beholding him.—But, oh, ten thousand times twice told would I rather be the unhappy maniac, or the miserable old man I am, than be the author of our misery!'

"No spectre could appear more ghastly than did this administrator of critical acids, at that moment—I had smote his conscience—and I quitted him."

Here the conclusion of the lecture brought a concourse of people into the reading-rooms; and among the number some of the party with which Edward and the doctor had come. They took an affectionate leave of the unhappy Ogilvy, after having extorted from the old gentleman a new promise to visit Roseville-House.

CHAPTER IX.

RIVAL DUCHESSES.

BY the influence and management of the duchess of Belgrave, the honour of opening the fashionable campaign of 1804-5 was procured for the Rosevilles. The *uninitiated* in the manners and customs, the hopes and the fears, the joys and the sorrows, the pleasures and the pains, peculiar to the inhabitants of the fashionable world, will scarcely be able to comprehend the extent of advantages which this event conferred.

No sooner was this important fact announced, than every "fashionable" of whatever rank, or sex, or age, was put into a state of requisition. From the most powerful rulers among these people, to the weakest; from the duchess who could summon her host of hundreds to the field, down to the slip-slop

retainer of six old maids, every leader was instantaneously in motion.

The policy of her grace of Belgrave, on this occasion, was never exceeded by any instance recorded in the history of fashion. To illustrate the wisdom and the spirit of her measures, it will be necessary to take a brief view of the state of parties which at that period agitated the fashionable empire.

Without descending to a minute detail of the many petty feuds and factions into which the population was divided, and which, in a greater or less degree, exist in all states, and are every where converted by the competitors for power to the purposes of their individual ambition, we shall confine ourselves to the history of the two great rivals, under one or other of whose banners all lesser divisions were blended, in order to display their united zeal in the cause of a Drinkwater or a Belgrave. The character of the latter of these leaders has already

been unfolded, with the brilliant career of her earlier days.

It was not till the influence of Belgrave had received a fatal shock, by an accidental exposure of her weakness, through the failure of some supplies, that there was found a rival hardy enough to contest it. At that epoch the duchess of Drinkwater appeared upon the field of fashion, and threw down the gauntlet of defiance to Belgrave: an event which produced upon the fashionable world an effect precisely similar to that which the natural world sustains from the convulsion of an earthquake; or which the moral world experienced from the French revolution.

Before this challenge was given, to have doubted that the will of Belgrave was the law of fashion, would have been deemed an abrogation of loyalty itself; to have scrupled in believing that the mind of Belgrave was the divinity of taste, would have been con-

sidered the worst of wilful heresies. What then must have been the surprise, the horror, of a people cherishing such sentiments, when they beheld the duchess of Drinkwater erecting her standard of revolt against the object of their allegiance and their worship, and promulgating with undaunted zeal a code and a creed diametrically opposite to the principles of their former obedience and faith!

No contrast could be stronger:—the duchess of Belgrave was in her person lovely, graceful, and delicate:—the duchess of Drinkwater was truly masculine in form and feature, coarse in her complexion, and unmeaning in her countenance.

The duchess of Belgrave spoke with the persuasive eloquence of a seraph smile, in a voice sweet as the notes of the nightingale: the duchess of Drinkwater bellowed her commands with the lungs of a boatswain:—the one rode, walked, danced, entered a room, joined company, or retired,

always with the elegantly easy dignity of a woman of quality: the other rode like a market-woman, walked like a grenadier, and danced like the witches in Macbeth; she would burst into a parlour with the rudeness of an exciseman into a wine-cellar; break up a conversation by an obtrusive loud horse-laugh; and march away from a party in the middle of a question specially addressed to herself.

The usual preludes of war took place between these hostile leaders of fashion. Her grace of Belgrave contented herself with silent contempt of what seemed to be universally considered as vulgarity. The duchess of Drinkwater, however, was loud in propagating her disapprobation of the elegant manners of her rival, and active in making converts to her jolly system of "laugh and grow fat." At first her success was confined to a few secret enemies of Belgrave, who, glad of an opportunity of revenge for real or fancied slights, seized with

avidity every little chance of mortifying their former sovereign. In a short time, however, the evil genius of Belgrave obtained a triumph for her enemy, replete with important consequences.

In what shape the sprite appeared is not ascertained, though it has been asserted that it was in the guise of a Scotch piper. The effect of his appearance is however undoubted; for the jolly duchess, inspired by him, became the patroness of reels, a lively species of dancing, which requiring little skill or grace, soon superseded the minuet *de la cour*, and a variety of other minuets, which had been introduced by the duchess of Belgrave. The same evil genius returning to his victim, completed his malice, by suggesting that such jigging and romping was inconsistent with the elegance that should distinguish the amusements of the higher orders of society, and inducing her absolutely to prohibit them at all her parties.

Without entering into the controversy

whether reels and jigs ought or ought not to have been sanctioned, it is sufficient to observe, that the fashionable world became almost universally intoxicated with the novelty; and every ball during that winter was opened with the duchess of Drinkwater's Fancy, or the duchess of Drinkwater's Whim.

It now became impossible to dissemble; the duchesses never met without betraying some signs of approaching hostilities. The patroness of reels cracked the shoulder straps of sixteen dresses by exercising herself in shrugs at the duchess of Belgrave; and the latter tore two dozen of fans in flirting at the former. At length war was openly declared by both parties, and the first blow was struck by the duchess of Drinkwater, who gave a grand gala the same night on which her rival had previously announced one. This was a grand trial of strength; and, such is the slender reliance which the rulers of fashion ought to place upon the loyalty of their followers, the love of change, a revolutionary

spirit, or some other cause unknown, actually seduced the great majority of the fashionable world to the fête of the duchess of Drinkwater, while her grace of Belgrave could scarcely muster company enough to keep the air of her stately apartments something above the freezing point.

This was the beginning of disasters. That very evening did the Belgrave sport a new and really elegant dress hat, of which some scores were privately promised as a great favour by Le Brun; when lo! on the same night, the Drinkwater for the first time appeared in a black crop wig; and to the utter confusion and loss of poor Le Brun and her patroness, not a Belgrave hat was to be seen; while Ross and his patroness laughed heartily at the multitude, who every where appeared in a black Drinkwater wig.

Godsall had finished for the Belgrave a most tasteful coach, hung very high, with one of the richest hammercloths that could be made. Immediately the Drinkwater bespoke

at Hatchet's a coach hung so low that it obtained the name of a *muddy*; and in opposition to the expensive hammercloth, she further ventured to introduce a plain black leather chair for the driver, which was called a dicky.—Victory was again with her grace, for *muddies* and *dickies* carried all before them.

The tide of success was now clearly against the duchess of Belgrave. Season after season she had the mortification to see the ranks of her rival increasing, and her notoriety swelling into fame; while she herself was literally deserted by her former followers, and her name daily dwindling into obscurity, or only mentioned in connection with some new disasters.

The contest which had in the outset been severe, and attended with incredible expenses to both the combatants, had for the last four or five years been languishing into a species of hollow truce. The duchess of Drinkwater had succeeded in obtaining splendid alliances for three of her daughters;

and as if that object had been her chief incentive to the war, no sooner was it accomplished, than she withdrew from the field of battle, and recruited in retirement the spirits and the revenues which she had so nearly exhausted.

In the Highlands of Scotland she was planning her schemes for the marriage of her only remaining daughter, when the first paragraph respecting Edward Montagu and lady Emily Roseville reached her sight. In the list of her intended admirers of her Seraphina, she had inserted the name of the marquis of Arberry, because, in the first place, he was heir to a dukedom, and her daughter, she vowed, should be a duchess; and in the next place he was likely to be very rich, a qualification which was also indispensable for the husband of her Seraphina. Her spies in London now corroborated all the intelligence of the newspapers respecting the intended marriage of the marquis with lady Emily Roseville, and she resolved instantly to re-

pair to London with a view of breaking off the match, and, if possible, entangling the marquis in the net of charms which Seraphina was taught to spread.

In the mean time the duchess of Belgrave, apprised by her emissaries of the approach of the enemy to the capital, with a promptitude and foresight not to be surpassed by the best and bravest generals, determined instantly to take the field, and open the campaign before her rival could rally her forces, or even be aware of her danger.

Experience had taught her how much depended upon novelty, how much upon the resources of wealth, how much upon those of talents and activity; and sensible that the day was past when she might have vanquished her enemy in her own name, she now resolved to attack and if possible to conquer her with the forces of Roseville.

Having succeeded so far as to influence entirely the councils of Roseville House, it only remained to arrange the plan of the

campaign, or, in other words, to determine upon the nature of the entertainment to be given. Upon this important point some debate ensued.

Lady Roseville suggested, with her native humility, the propriety of taking the field by a simple rout or assembly; but her advice was rebutted with spirit by the experienced general Belgrave. With the ardour and prompitude of a Buonaparte, she declared for *dashing* measures.

"The town must be carried by storm," said her grace. "While such cold calculators as the duchess of Drinkwater, with all the frigid economy of her native North, are collecting a little money, and a few forces to meet us, reckoning upon our weakness, we must by a display of unbounded magnificence, taste, and expense, and an innumerable army in our train, at once overwhelm their puny preparations, and strike a blow that shall palsy every effort of our rivals for the remainder of the season. My

voice, therefore, is against your ladyship's project of opening the campaign with only such common-place measures as a rout affords. I am decidedly for a grand masked gala. The ample space which such a mansion as Roseville House yields for the display of taste, is almost of itself a sure ground of victory. But when the wealth of my lord Roseville here is recollected, which is the sinew of fashionable as well as national warfare, I declare it would be absolute insanity to reject the greater for the lesser means of conquest."

Her grace's eloquence prevailed. Her policy was assisted by the vanity of lord Roseville and his son, and the warm wishes of the young female members of this cabinet of taste. At the very mention of masks, ladies Emily, Selina, and Paulina

——— "felt their little souls on fire;
For, of all scenes they had not yet survey'd,
Their hearts most panted for a masquerade."

CHAPTER X.

A MASQUERADE.

ON the evening appointed for the grand masked gala, the interior of Roseville House presented a series of the most finished specimens of scenic art.

No longer let the descriptions of entertainments recorded in the Arabian Nights be regarded as fabulous, when the nobility, and even the merchants of London, can charm away the hours of winter with such fêtes as these.

The mansion of lord Roseville stood upon a large space of ground, and formed a noble quadrangle, in the centre of which were spacious gardens. This building, and these grounds, had been committed to the taste of the duchess of Belgrave and captain Neville, under whose directions some of the first

artists and machinists in the kingdom had been employed; and by their almost magic powers the private dwelling of an English nobleman was metamorphosed into the following scenes.

The visitor, having had the good fortune to squeeze his way through the thronged avenues,

> " Where now the rout's full myriads close
> " The staircase and the door;
> " And where thick files of belles and beaux
> " Perspire through every pore;"

and having passed the scrutiny of that necessary appendage of routs and revels, Townshend, before whose piercing eye the disguised pickpocket, and the noble bearer of a forged ticket, tremble alike with terror of detection, was first introduced into an apartment, which represented " the rich alhambra of the Moorish kings."

The design of this superb scene was classically correct. The earl of Roseville

and his countess, habited in exact costume as a Moorish prince and princess, here received their guests; a train of attendants, and a band of musicians, who welcomed the company with notes of Moorish melody, were all dressed in corresponding habits.

Passing through this apartment, the visitor next entered a long gallery, which was formed into an Egyptian temple, the effect of which was truly grand and striking from the perfect delusion of the artist's magic pencil.

At the termination of this gallery, which formed one side of the quadrangle, the company passed into the gardens, which were covered in, and by the united efforts of the painter and the machinist, were converted into the gardens and pavilion of a Turkish seraglio. The reality itself, of which this scene was a representation, could scarcely excite more voluptuous ideas in the imagination of a beholder. Beautiful young ladies, in the dress of Grecian slaves,

were scattered in groups, some playing on musical instruments, while others danced, and others again were bearing refreshments or perfumes.

The perfection of art seemed accomplished by the effects of the artificial cypress trees, whose branches were put in motion by invisible machinery, and thus appeared to be really agitated by the air.

There was a pavilion erected in this garden, which was also a *chef d' œuvre* of art. It was built in the rotundo form: the roof was supported by pillars of gold studded with precious stones, around which were entwined wreaths of variegated lamps; from the centre of the dome, which was painted in a masterly style, with the luxuriant representation of every species of oriental fruit, foliage, and flowers, was suspended a superb chandelier; and beneath its trembling splendour, a fountain of curious workmanship played rose-water into golden vases. Superb sofas, with cushions of white satin, richly

embroidered, were placed on elevated platforms, covered with beautiful Persian carpets, and seemed to invite the spectator to enjoyment and repose.

Here it was intended that supper should be served to the Prince of Wales, who, with two or three of his royal brothers, was expected to honour the masquerade with his presence; and for the exclusive accommodation of whom, and such favourites as they should select, this pavilion was erected.

As the introduction of lady Emily was one of the chief objects of the entertainment, the duchess of Belgrave had insisted upon her assuming the character of a Turkish sultana, in agreement with this scene.

No fancied description of beauty and splendour ever conveyed an idea sufficiently expressive of the effects of their united charms, as now beheld in the daughter of lord Roseville. Her dress was precisely that of the beautiful Fatima, described by lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whose authority

had been implicitly followed in the design and decorations of this scene, as well as in the costume of the characters.

" She was dressed in a *caftán* of gold brocade, flowered with silver, very well fitted to her shape, and showing to admiration the beauty of her bosom, only shaded by a thin gauze. Her drawers were pale pink; her waistcoast green and silver; her slippers white satin, finely embroidered; her lovely arms adorned with bracelets of diamonds; upon her head a rich Turkish handkerchief of pink and silver; her own fine hair hanging a great length in various tresses, and on one side of her head some bodkins of jewels *."

The fourth scene was intended as a contrast to the Turkish one. The whole of the gardens being occupied by the latter, the spectator, upon quitting the brilliantly illuminated pavilion, again entered the

* Lady M. W. Montagu's Works.

house, the north quadrangle of which was in general used as a picture gallery; for which purpose three stories had been thrown into one, and the light was admitted from the top.

The paintings which usually occupied this gallery were sent into temporary banishment; and the apartment, under the skilful management of Carbonel, Loutherbourg, and that promising young artist Kerr Porter, with the assistance of some amateurs of fashion, now became the exact representation of a tract of the dreary desert of Arabia, at the hour of midnight.

No words can convey to the imagination a just conception of the gloomy grandeur of this panoramic deception.

So elegantly was it executed, that the spectator, stepping out of a blaze of splendour, shrunk back with horror at the darkness visible; and ladies actually shrieked at the well counterfeited howlings of beasts of

prey, and of the hollow whistling blasts of wind, which seemed alternately to scatter and collect the heaps of sand. At the extremity of the scene was a well executed design of the ruins of a species of ancient temple, consisting of vast piles of stone, in such a variety of forms and situations as rendered it impossible to conjecture what had been its form or use. Behind the remains of an uncouth arch, formed by the fragments of two immense columns of stone, appeared a light issuing through the mouth of a cavern, from the fires of a troop of wandering Arabs, whose camels were seen crouching among the ruins.

The interior of the cave was excellently designed; and the parts of the robbers were well supported by several young noblemen, at the head of whom, as their captain, was the dashing son of the duchess of Belgrave.

Other groups of these wild Arabs were discernible by the light of the fires, round

which they sat in different parts of the seeming desert, and consisted of professional and amateur singers, who from tent to tent answered one another in a wild hunting or warlike chorus.

The other rooms of the earl's extensive mansion were laid out in the usual style of festive apartments, elegantly illuminated, and amply supplied with the most expensive viands served in the most magnificent manner.

About eleven o'clock the masks began to assemble, and before twelve the rooms and gardens were most fashionably crowded. As dominos were expressly prohibited, the number of characters was uncommonly great; but without much extension of the usual variety. In the words of a moral and elegant poet—

" Here beaux esprits in various figures lurk
Of Jew and Gentile, Bramin, Tartar, Turk;

> Wonder all shapes in this assembly finds,
> Hermits and demons, emperors and hinds;
> All that diversify life's crowded field,
> And all prolific phantasy can yield*."

From among this motley assembly it may be necessary to select and to describe a few.

The duchess of Belgrave, who had chosen for herself the semblance of Diana, had nominated the characters of the Roseville family party. She had converted the earl and countess into a Moorish prince and his queen, and their heir and her own into captains of banditti. Lady Emily she had created sultana of the Turkish gardens, and the marquis of Arberry, in a fit of gallantry, had resolved to become her adoring sultan. Edward Montagu's figure she had declared, would be sacrificed in any other character than that of Apollo, in which he would be mistaken for the Belvidere statue

* Hayley.

in motion. Edward, however, resisted this decree from an impulse of modesty, and chose the character of Beattie's Edwin :

" Adorn'd with native elegance, he wore,
In simplest form, the minstrel dress of yore."

Her own lovely daughters the duchess formed into Savoyards, and the ladies Paulina and Selina into Swiss peasants.

Doctor Hoare, who had been much pleased with the whimsicality of Fawcett in sir Andrew Analyze, determined to be a dictionary-maker * for the evening ; and captain Neville, to afford his tongue a licence of volubility, assumed the dress of a barrister.

The duke of Delaware, in the rich dress

* In the comedy of the " Blind Bargain," sir Andrew Analyze is the author of an improved dictionary : he carries his manuscript constantly in his pocket, and takes every opportunity of giving his new definitions of any word that is spoken in his presence.

of an old English baron, seemed doomed to drag about the rooms the antiquated lady Aurora Rumble, in the guise of a black nun.

But among the numerous actors on the temporary stage of Roseville house there was one genuine character which challenged general admiration. The elegant deportment, the graceful manners, the noble mien, and the refined wit, of the most accomplished prince in Europe, were not to be concealed beneath the guise of a Spanish grandee. His royal highness was soon discovered, and wherever he bent his steps, there was the point of attraction.

On the right arm of the prince hung the goddess Diana, and at his left side walked her rival, the duchess of Drinkwater, who, in point of size, did ample justice to the character of queen Elizabeth; for in the late wars of these rival chiefs, his royal highness had supported a dignified neu-

trality; and had in fact, after many benevolent efforts, been the negociator of the present hollow truce.

The prince applauded the tastefulness of the arrangements and scenery, and commended the correctness of the decorations and costume. Every one knew, from the paragraphs which Neville had taken care to insert in all the papers, that the duchess of Belgrave was the supreme directress of the fête, and every echo of applause was therefore a triumph to her grace.

"Well now, after all," said the jolly queen, "I think there's too much cold correctness for this kind of thing: it may be all right as to the likeness of the places, and all that; but when one recollects that the intention of the meeting is to laugh and be merry, I declare I would rather see the young people singling out partners, and going down a merry country dance, than sauntering about in a sort of restraint. What say you, sir?"

"Both are well in their way!" said the prince. "Taste, I trust, has its votaries as well as mirth."

"Don't you think," said Diana to her rival, "that an entertainment like this, to which the most polished as well as the highest characters in the kingdom are invited, should be distinguished at least as much for its magnificence and taste as for its frolic and fun."

The ruff of queen Elizabeth was in a sort of agitation at this sneer:—"I protest I don't see the necessity," said her majesty; "for however people may affect to despise 'frolic and fun,' mirth is the end of the assembly. And then the expense of this scenery, in my opinion, is out of all comparison with the object."

"Oh, if it be a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, nobody will contest that with the duchess of Drinkwater!" said her rival. "I was connecting the question with its influence on the higher orders of society;

and consequently on the progress of taste, and the encouragement of the fine arts."

Here they found themselves in the Egyptian temple, where Edward Montagu, in his minstrel character, had been prevailed upon to accompany an air purposely composed and written on the occasion by Anacreon Moore, at the especial request of the duchess of Belgrave.

"Who is the minstrel?" said the prince.

"Edward Montagu," said Diana.

"What the phænomenon of the lakes?" said his royal highness.

"The same—And here comes that cross cynic, doctor Hoare, who has taken the trouble to copy Fawcett's dress in the new play, for the pleasure of saying ill-natured things in the character of sir Andrew Analyze. Now will I pose the dictionary-monger. How d'ye, sir Andrew Analyze? How d'ye do? How proceeds the dictionary? Pray, sir Andrew, how does it explain the word 'Prince?' Turn to it, sir Andrew!"

The doctor was indeed rather posed, as her grace had expressed it, and with an arch smile she twitched the sleeve of the prince.

"O chaste Diana," said the doctor, after two or three hems, "I should with pleasure obey you; but for prince, simply, I have no definition. Here are a variety of compounds. Take an example:—'The Prince of the Power of the Air:'—see Beelzebub, Old Nick, &c. 'The Prince of Peace;'—one of the most quarrelsome fellows in Europe, whose policy has driven away peace from the country he rules, and whose conduct has sown the seeds of civil war in the hearts of an outraged people. Then again here is 'Prince of Wales:'—a nation's hope—vide Taste, Generosity, Magnificence, Valour, Liberality, Patriotism."

"Is this your cross cynic?" said the prince. "He is a downright flatterer! Pray, sir, do me the favour to turn to the word 'Duchess.'"

"Ah, sir," said the doctor with a sigh, "an accident has befallen that part of my dictionary! As I was compiling my definitions of duchess, from the very highest authorities, a tear happened to fall upon my manuscript, and occasioned such a blot on the word, that the leaf was destroyed, and I have never since felt the least inclination to go over the authorities again!"

The duchess of Belgrave sighed; then, in an affected tone of liveliness, said, "The minstrel has vanished, I declare! Come, let us seek the phænomenon:"—and away she hurried the prince.

Queen Elizabeth, being accosted by the duke of Delaware, to whom she wished to pay her court, remained.

"Sir Andrew, sir Andrew," said a female mask, running towards the doctor, followed by half a dozen others. "We have been disputing about some words; do put us right. Now, first of all, sir Andrew, 'Fashion!'"

"Fashion!" said the doctor, pretending to look at his manuscript. "'Fashion'—A varnish which is much used for the purpose of creating a false gloss. It is, like most other varnishes, of a poisonous nature, and produces the strangest effects upon the unhappy persons who use it. It causes them to go to bed when the sun rises, and to take an airing at midnight. It makes them suppose themselves full-dressed when they are half-naked. It occasions them to come to town for the winter when the lovely spring of nature smiles in all her charms; and to go into the country for the purpose of enjoying the summer, just as the fall of the leaf gives notice of the approach of winter. It makes them do many things that are extremely painful to them, which they call taking their pleasures; and it deters them from the pursuit of heartfelt enjoyments, from a dread of their petrifying dulness. At length it deprives them of the power of seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, reasoning,

or deciding for themselves, and compels them to see, hear, taste, feel, reason, and decide as *other persons do.*"

"Ah, mon dieu! monsieur le Dictionnaire! it be time you travel to learn better manners to the ladies. Allons, monsieur, allons; a Paris, a Paris," said Charles Torrington, in the character of a French postillion, concluding his speech with a loud crack of his whip, to the terror and annoyance of those near him.

"Ha, ha, ha, well done, Charles! Ha, ha, ha! No sermons here! Let's laugh and grow fat!" said queen Elizabeth.

"So we will, God bless your jolly majesty!" said an English sailor, who was the elder of the Torringtons. "My timbers! yours were the times for old England, bonny Bess. Only look, messmates, at the difference of beef steak breakfasters, and the sippers of souchong! Aye, aye, those were the times!—Oh the golden days of good

queen Bess! Merry be the memory of good queen Bess!"

Here a number of masks joined in chorus, and dancing round queen Elizabeth, bore her away in triumph.

The prince and the duchess of Belgrave had followed the minstrel into the Turkish gardens, where a crowd were gazing with admiration at the beautiful sultana, who was distributing her attentions with a grace that won all hearts.

The prince approached, and in a short time discovered that the mind of the fair Turk was no less richly furnished than her person.

That unaffected affability which encourages merit of every description to disclose itself, had drawn Edward also into this brilliant circle, and he was enjoying some of the happiest moments of his life, in a delightful conversation, which was passing between the prince, the duchess of Belgrave, lady Emily, the marquis of Arberry, and himself, when

suddenly his eye caught a mask, dressed in all points exactly like the "Woodman," whom he had been taught to call his father. An involuntary start attracted the observation of the party, and the fair sultana, with a lively sensibility, which evinced something more than a common regard, inquired—"Are you unwell, Mr. Montagu?"

"Rather—no—yes, a little;—I beg pardon—It will be over in an instant." While he made this apology, he directed his eyes to the prince, and then, with a trembling anxiety, he again turned them back towards the spot where had stood the woodman:—he was vanished.

"Surely I saw it!" said he, with surprise, scarcely knowing that he spoke.

"Saw what?" said the duchess. "Bless me, the youth is love-stricken! What have you seen?"

"An object," said Edward, "which has renewed feelings of such powerful interest,

that I cannot possibly dissemble them.—I saw him, I am certain;—and with your gracious leave I must again discover him."

Thus saying, and throwing down his harp upon the floor of the pavilion, he rushed forth in pursuit of the woodman. At the same instant the duke of C—— beckoned the prince, who joined his royal brother.

"Our young minstrel is in love, lady Emily;—so far is certain;" said the duchess; "and this object, that has renewed feelings of such powerful interest, must be the very fair herself."

"Did he not say he must again discover *him*?" said lady Emily.

"Oh, that's love's common artifice! for *him*, read *her*, my dear," said the duchess.

"Do you really think so?" said lady Emily, with a sigh.

"Heyday!" exclaimed the duchess, "my lord marquis, bridegroom elect! pray did that sigh take a direction towards your lord-

ship, or has it wandered after the handsome minstrel in search 'of an object that renews feelings of such powerful interests.'"

"The heat's intolerably oppressive," said the marquis. "One might believe oneself actually in Turkey."

"Lady Emily thinks so too, I am sure, by her countenance. Mercy upon me, what makes you both look so vastly silly! You, poor thing, I can pity," continued her grace, patting playfully the cheek of lady Emily. "These affairs of the heart are new to you, child;—but for you—oh for shame, my lord, don't make yourself ridiculous; it's natural enough for this little heart to be in love; but for a man of your fashion and experience to be jealous! Oh fie, fie!"

"Who—I jealous?—Ha, ha ha! That's very good; of whom should I be jealous, pray? Upon my honour, it is not one of your grace's happiest strokes of complimentary humour to paint a pennyless foundling as an

object of jealousy to the marquis of Arberry, or of love to the daughter of the nobleman who feeds him."

"Why, now, if you grow serious, Arberry, I shall really suspect you!"

"Serious! oh no, its a good joke enough; eh, isn't it, lady Emily?"

Lady Emily heard little of this bantering; her mind was deeply involved in thoughts which the conduct of Edward had excited; and she was at that moment examining the state of her heart, and asking herself, if with such feelings towards him, she ought to become the wife of another.

The entrance of other company relieved both her and the marquis, whose pride was more deeply wounded than his love, by the jealousy which, notwithstanding his denial, the duchess had actually kindled.

CHAPTER XI.

A DETECTION.

"STRANGE, incomprehensible being!" said Edward to himself, as he buffetted through the crowd of masks. "What species of eccentricity is thine, thus to sport with the feelings of thy offspring? How many opportunities of private intercourse might have been embraced since I have resided here—and you have selected a moment like this to appear to your son!"

As he passed on, he encountered the signor Belloni, with his niece, and sir Everard Beauchamp: they were all habited in Turkish dresses.

"Whither so fast, young minstrel, pray," said her ladyship.

"Have you seen a mask something like Barker's Woodman," said Edward, "with a girdle round his loins, a bill hook, and a—"

"I saw such a character," interrupted sir Everard; "and I imagined he stared very rudely at lady Beauchamp and the signor:—and, see there, yonder he is again."

"Yes, yes, that is he indeed!" said Edward with emotion.

"Who is it?" said Belloni: "You seem much agitated at his appearance! Do you know him?"

"No—yes—no!"

"No, yes, no," said lady Beauchamp: "Pray, good minstrel, do these three monosyllables make a negative or an affirmative?"

Edward did not hear one word that her ladyship had uttered; he had abruptly walked away towards the woodman.

"I must observe this woodman; there is some connexion between them," said Belloni to his niece. "Go you two to the Arabian scene, I will meet you presently near the cavern."

Belloni stepped briskly after Edward: the

latter endeavoured to avoid him, but it was impracticable: the Italian put his arm round Edward's, and with an air of indifference asked some frivolous question, though he perceived the eyes and attention of Edward riveted to the woodman, who was standing, with his back towards them, in a contemplative attitude, gazing stedfastly upon the earl and countess of Roseville, as they were surrounded by their motley guests.

The first impulse of Edward almost induced him to throw himself publicly into the arms of his father. The intrusion of Belloni gave a moment for recollection; and his evident desire to discover who was the woodman, kindled at once alarm and caution.

The words "Beware the monk Belloni," which in the first moment of surprise had not occurred to him, now played in legible characters before his fancy; and with swiftness, turning on his heel, he walked away from the alhambra.

"How now, sir?" said Belloni. "Where are you going? Yonder is the person you were seeking."

"No," said Edward, to whom falsehood was a difficult task: "No; I am mistaken; I perceive it is not the person whom I supposed it was."

"You have not seen his face, how then do you convince yourself?"

"I am sure it is not he."

"Who? Who is it not?" said Belloni.

"Your curiosity seems awakened, signor!"

"Your conduct, like all mystery, is calculated to excite curiosity; but I am no woman, sir."

"My conduct, signor!"

"Nay, nay, I am old in the ways of mankind, as I told you when first I saw you; and you are young, very young. But I have certainly nothing to do with your secret, sir."

"Secret! What mean you?"

"You will not tell a man of my penetration, sir, that there is not a secret connected with the appearance of that mask?"

"Signor Belloni, I must beg leave to hint that our conversation is becoming too categorical to be pleasant."

"As you choose, Mr. Montagu. Trust me or not. I may seem officious. I may, presumptuously perhaps, over-rate my own abilities; but I cannot help thinking it is in my power to serve you in this business."

"In what business? Speak plainly, signor!"

"No, that would be a violation of politeness."

"Wave that consideration, and speak plainly."

"Would you have me remind you of the ambiguity of your birth?"

"Signor! Signor!"

"Would you have me plainly say how much it told to my penetration, when I saw

the ardent, fixed attention of your eyes upon this woodman, and of the woodman's upon the countess of Roseville?"

"Did he fix his eyes upon the countess?" As Edward spoke he reeled with giddiness, and struck his forehead violently with his hand.

At that instant lord Barton and the marquis of Hartley came up dressed as banditti, with pistols, sabres, and other weapons in their girdles.

"How now, minstrel?" said lord Barton. "What, in distress? Come, we have been seeking you. Our cave is filled with lovely captives. Where's your harp? Seriously, we want your company! The royal guests are there: you have been much talked of, and must come."

Edward, overpowered by the confusion of ideas which Belloni's speech had excited, could not reply; he stood silent and motionless, with his hand still covering his forehead.

"Is this in character?" said the marquis of Hartley.

"Curse me if I understand it!" said lord Barton. "Signor Belloni, will you explain? Are you dumb too? Lady Beauchamp, and her son, poor fellow, are waiting for you in the cave."

"Mr. Montagu has been suddenly attacked with a violent head-ache," said the artful Italian.

"What ails you? There is something the matter, Montagu, beyond doubt," said lord Barton; "for I find Arberry and my sister have been frightened out of their wits by a mad fit that seized you in the pavilion."

"They say you bounded like a roe after some object," said the marquis of Hartley,—"whether male or female is unknown,—but that, according to your own confession, it was an object whose appearance excited an interest too powerful to conceal. Some witch of the Lakes, eh, Montagu?"

"It was not a female object, I will pledge my honour, lords," said Belloni, with a piercing and expressive glance of the eye directed to Edward.

"Here comes Neville," exclaimed lord Barton: "he in the barrister's wig. Let's make him our prisoner, and leave these unintelligible gentlemen to ponder over their powerful feelings and interesting emotions, and such kind of things, with which we wild Arabs, you know, have no sort of business."

"Allons, de tout mon cœur, mon ami!" said the marquis, and away they tripped.

"You see, sir," said the Italian, after they were gone, "you see I may be trusted. I can keep a secret as well as I can discover one!"

"Sir!" said Edward, who began to doubt whether Belloni did not actually know more than he did himself of the seeming woodman, "sir, your expressions and your insinuations are of such a nature

that I am bound to demand their explanation: the present time and place are improper for the purpose, but my feelings must be satisfied at the very nearest opportunity."

"I agree with you that we should understand one another better upon this subject; and I allow that here we cannot enter upon explanations. You shall see me early to-morrow. In the mean time,—forgive the freedom,—but for lady Roseville's sake be more watchful of your feelings, and do not suffer the warmth of your emotions to endanger her reputation!"

A crowd of characters, haymakers, ballad-singers, harlequins, watchmen, sailors, &c. now separated them, and some minutes elapsed ere Edward found himself alone.

"Lady Roseville's reputation!" murmured he. "Lady Roseville!" At the same instant the incident of the picture in the little parlour rushed upon his memory; and in spite of the assertion of doctor Hoare,

he gave himself up to the impression of the moment, that lady Roseville was his mother, and that he was consequently the illegitimate son of the woodman, whoever he might be.

"Yes, it must be so!" said he in soliloquy: "This well-contrived story of a shipwreck, just on the very spot where at the very time this seemingly benevolent family resided! Yes, it is plain—too plain! I am the offspring of illicit love, and therefore doomed to wear through life the badge of charity, and to be pointed at as the dependent of the deluded husband of my natural parent! What then is my father—to permit this infamous deception?—Can he be a man, and suffer such an outrage to the feelings of humanity as to——'

At that moment a footstep behind him startled him, and turning round, he saw the "Woodman."

There was no other creature near them.

The woodman saw impatience pictured on the countenance of Edward, whose mask was thrown aside, and he said to him in Italian :

" Recollect yourself, my son ! Be calm!"

" The feelings of nature will no longer be trifled with," said Edward in the same language. " If you are my father, take me this moment to your bosom. I will surrender the probabilities of all future benefits for the certainty of knowing that I am your son. I can no longer remain the imaginary creature you would have me. Say who you are—Explain to me the cause of so much mystery ; or I must, in spite of all the wishes of my heart, I must conclude that some impos——"

" Hold !—I can conceive the emotions that agitate your breast, and I regret the necessity which has made me the creature of disguise, even to you, my son !"

" Why are you disguised ?"

"To conceal me from my enemy, until the hour of danger shall be past."

"When will that be?"

"When the monk Belloni is consigned to death, or at least to chains."

"Does the apprehension of danger spring from Belloni?"

"Yes."

"Fly then my father, fly! Belloni has discovered you to-night."

"How? Impossible! No human being save yourself could know me; and surely an oath so sacredly, and solemnly, and voluntarily given, has not been violated, nor the life of a father sported with by you!"

"Oh, no; I swear it has not. But when you vanished from my first view of you to-night, in my eagerness to discover you again, I was so indiscreet as to ask Belloni if he had seen a mask dressed as you are. He seemed determined to discover who was the object of my search. He saw

the anxiety of my countenance; and whether by chance he guessed the fact, or whether he indeed knew your person, he gave me plainly to understand that he was aware you were my father."

"Who did he say your father was?" cried the woodman with anxious quickness.

"That he did not insinuate."

"You revive me.—I see it then.—It is another effort of his artifice. Your ingenuous face discovered the deep interest you cherished for the Mask in a woodman's guise; and he has pretended to know that which you could not conceal. Now, then, do you not admit the wisdom of the mystery which rendered it impossible that you should have disclosed to him *who* was your father? For, had you known that secret, his consummate art would have contrived to have discovered it; and, had he so far succeeded, there is no murderous stratagem he would have left untried, until my death had

sealed his safety. As it is, his fancied security in my supposed death is the very mine of his destruction on which he hourly treads, and which the hand of justice is even now stretched forth to spring."

"See," said Edward, "yonder is Belloni. He who is whispering in his ear, in the barrister's gown, is—"

"Captain Neville!" interrupted the woodman.

"You know him, then?"

"Yes, and his designs. They are at this moment planning their fraudulent manœuvres, to be played off at a game of chance, into which, by the fascination of the duchess of Belgrave, the heir of your benefactor, lord Barton, is to be allured. Before his arrival in town, you were their destined victim. Now they have higher game. They mean to pigeon him, as their phrase is; and sorry am I to add that the duchess is to share with them the spoil."

"Impossible!" said Edward. "Belloni

may be a villain, Neville may be a sharper, but the duchess of Belgrave——"

"Is their infatuated instrument. She is the victim of early dissipation, and has been hurried from one error to another, until from indiscretion she has plunged into crime. From my soul I pity her, for she knows not the extent of the misery she occasions to many. I hope, however, even yet to redeem her: at least the power of this arch-devil Belloni shall be transient. Look at the scoundrels!" continued he. "Mark their significant gestures. Now the poor victim whose ruin they devise advances. Observe him, how readily he falls into the toils that the gamesters have spread for him!"

Lord Barton and the marquis of Hartley joined Belloni and Neville as he spoke.

"Would it not be acting rightly to apprise those young men of their danger?"

"No.—What proof beyond my assertion have you that they are in danger? They would scoff at a cautionary hint. No—let

them purchase a short experience. Hartley indeed has little to lose, and that little will recur to him again from his mother. Barton is a full-feathered pigeon; but he is the son of my Amelia, and I will preserve him."

Edward trembled with astonishment.

The woodman perceived his surprise. "You marvel at my words:—yes, of my Amelia, I repeat—of her who thirty years ago——"

Here doctor Hoare came running towards them.

"By all the vowels in the alphabet," said he, "I swear I am out of breath with searching for you, young runaway! You must follow me this instant. The prince is making up his supper party, and you are honoured with an invitation."

"Poor minstrel!" said the woodman: "will not thy young head grow giddy in a scene like this?"

"Alas! good sir, no!" said Edward.

"The heaviness of my heart will be sufficient ballast for the lightness of my head."

"You a heavy heart?" said doctor Hoare. "Romantic nonsense!—A youth nursed in the lap of ease, and basking in the splendour of luxury, to talk of the heaviness of his heart! Let me see, what says my dictionary for 'Heaviness of Heart?'—'A pain felt by many a despairing widow, as she beholds her infant progeny, whose cries for food she has no means to satisfy!'—'A pain felt by the affectionate wife of an unfortunate debtor, torn from her arms and his children's embraces to a loathsome prison.'—'A pain felt by many a watching relative, who, leaning over the couch of sickness, views the last convulsive struggles of those they tenderly have loved.' These indeed may complain of heaviness of heart; but—"

"Are there no other cases?" said the woodman.

"Many; but none that can apply to the revellers in such a scene as this."

"Is it not possible," replied the woodman, "that even among these maskers there may be some whose dress of pastime hides an aching heart?"

They had now entered a retired room adjoining the alhambra, which was not thrown open to the guests.

"Listen," continued he: "I will suppose that there is one here, who in his early youth became enamoured of a most deserving object, and was supremely blessed with the sweet consciousness that his love was with equal love returned. These lovers were too young to marry; but the parents of the beautiful Amelia,—so, if you please, we will call her,—sanctioned their vows of mutual attachment, and a distant day was named for the consummation of their nuptials. The youth agrees to travel; he visits foreign lands; mountains and oceans divide him and the object of his soul's affection: but all his thoughts are fixed unceasingly on the bright spot that bears his loved Ame-

lia, and all his hopes rest on the happy day that is to make her his for ever. The hand of evil destiny pursues him; a murderer's poniard is aimed at his heart, and he is consigned to oblivion, though not to death. After a dreary pause of several years of almost blank existence, he awakes again, and the first sounds that strike upon restored reason, are:—'Your Amelia, who thinks you dead, is married to another.'"

"God of heaven!" exclaimed the doctor. "What do I hear? Whom do I hear? For God's sake, do not mock me with a tale so like to—"

"Silence awhile," resumed the woodman. "You have not heard the whole. We will suppose that the unfortunate wretch whom I have imagined, suffered the anguish of despair at such a stroke of fate, which inflicted far more painful wounds upon his heart than all the horrors of his situation. Yet at length, by the aid of

friendship, of reason, and, above all, religion, he was aroused to a sense of his duty as a christian and as a man. He exerted his faculties, disciplined his feelings, and submitted to the will of Heaven. He did more: he felt grateful to one of the most kind-hearted of human beings who had been instrumental in his recovery; a female about his own age, amiable in mind and manners, and not wanting in the graces of person. He married her—and became the father of a lovely child. Might he not then, you will say, have returned to his native land, to the abode of his youth, and the sight of his Amelia, without hazard of renewing former feelings?—No: such was the peculiarity of his fate, that he resolved never to make known his restoration to life to any individual who had known him before his imagined death. He determined to die in voluntary exile from the soil that gave him birth, covered with such impenetrable obscurity that not even the wife of his bosom,

or the child she had borne him, should ever know who he was, or the country from which he came."

"Go on, sir! Proceed, I beseech you!" said the doctor.

Edward, who plainly understood the allusion of this tale to himself, trembled with anxiety, but could not force his parched tongue to utter a single exclamation.

The woodman proceeded:

"It is possible, in spite of all that has been said about first love, that he who was torn from his Amelia by such sanguinary hands, might yet have found tranquillity, if not bliss, in the arms of a wife, and the caresses of an infant.—But no:—Fate, still frowning, next inflicted on his heart a wound more hard for man to bear, than even disappointed love.—He became the victim of the most direful passion the mind can suffer—jealousy. From jealousy to madness is but a hair's space in the brain,

and he threatened the life of his wife and infant. They escaped from his fury. The mother and the babe took shipping to seek a refuge in other climes: the vessel in which they had embarked foundered, and every creature that it contained perished."

"How! every creature! Was there not an infant saved? Did all perish?" exclaimed doctor Hoare, on whose mind a light darted like the sudden glare of lightning.

"At least so thought the jealous husband," continued the woodman: "but his fate was not then unravelled; his singular destiny is not even yet unfolded. He came to England to behold once more the mansion of his fathers, and die in peaceful resignation, as he told himself; but possibly with the self-concealed desire to bless his sight with the image of his ever tenderly remembered, and still innocently beloved, Amelia! —But what think you was the issue of his journey?—The unsought recovery of his

child from imagined death—the clear conviction of his injured wife's unsullied innocence! —Now, sir, if such a man as I have described should be among the merry maskers of to-night, must not he bear a heavy heart, to know himself the author of an innocent wife's destruction, and the cause of his son's dependency and want—want even of a name!"

"I am lost in wonder!" said the doctor. "I will not doubt; and yet there are a thousand questionable thoughts rushing at once upon my mind. Fortunately we are alone; we are unobserved!—Speak not then in parables. If my heart be right in its emotions, O confirm them. Alfred! Dare I repeat that name? Alfred!"

"Thy heart is right, my long lost friend," said the woodman; and taking off his hat he discovered a scar upon his forehead, at sight of which doctor Hoare started with surprise and joy.

"Yes," continued the woodman, "I am he! I am Alfred! I am Beauchamp!"

"Beauchamp!" exclaimed Edward. "Alfred! Sir Alfred Beauchamp, of Beauchamp-abbey?—What then am I?"

"Thou art the lawful heir apparent to that name, estate, and title."

"Wonderful providence!" exclaimed the doctor, clasping his hands together. Then, after a moment's pause, he threw his arms around the neck of the long lost sir Alfred, and wept tears of tenderness upon his cheek, while Edward kneeling clapsed the hand of his father between both his own, and fervently exclaimed:

"Blessed be the moment in which a father acknowledges his son!"

"Acknowledges!" said sir Alfred: "oh, I am proud of thee, my son, and soon before assembled throngs, in the seat of English justice, I will proclaim thee mine; when for thy sake I shall have recovered from the

sanguinary grasp of murder, those rights and those possessions which for ages have been the proud inheritance of thy illustrious ancestors!"

"Am I not in a dream?" said doctor Hoare. "Oh, surely this is delusion! Yet wake me not, do not undeceive me; for in this trance my heart experiences a richer glow of joy than it has felt these many, many years! Alfred alive!—Oh, never let me hear, or see, or think again, if hearing, sight, and reason, will not confirm the fact that Alfred Beauchamp lives!"

"Does my heart's early partner,—does my youth's friend doubt me?" said sir Alfred. "What then must I expect from those——"

"Oh no," interrupted the doctor; "my heart is not deceived. Those eyes beaming intelligence and benevolence cannot be counterfeits! And now, too, I recognise in this noble youth a similarity of face and feature! Blessed be the hand of Providence!

But wherefore this disguise? Why thus reveal yourself in parables? How is all this?"

"The time nor place suits well an explanation of this kind, my friend," said sir Alfred: "I have been betrayed by accidental trespasses upon my feelings and this unexpected privacy, to reveal myself thus far. The rest of my eventful story this paper will disclose. The cause of my appearance here to-night was to have offered this letter to Amelia. To you, doctor, I now confide it. It is intended to prepare her mind for the discoveries that must soon be public. I have long in secret been preparing the means of wresting from the usurpation of the present possessors, the inheritance of my fathers; and of delivering up to justice the blood-stained criminals, Belloni and his pretended niece."

"Pretended niece! Blood-stained criminals!" said doctor Hoare.

"Even so, my friend. They are all—a lie," continued sir Alfred. "The woman

is the paramour of him she calls her uncle; and the poor youth, whom they compel to act the part of heir to my unhappy brother Everard, is no more allied to him, or to them, than thou art. But, hush! We may be overheard. A premature discovery would afford these Italian murderers the chance of an escape, and deprive me of many proofs necessary to establish my claims, and to identify my son. For the present, therefore, let me seal your lips to perfect silence."

"We must yield to your decision," said doctor Hoare. "Not being in possession of all the facts that influence your conduct, I cannot judge of its propriety; but I feel impatient to exclaim to lady Roseville, 'Sir Alfred Beauchamp lives; and in the infant your benevolence has reared, he finds an only child.' Nay, further, I long to let a certain lady know, that a favoured youth is now no more to be considered as the orphan

of her father's bounty, but as the heir to an antient baronetage, and in every respect an object for whom she need not blush to own her heart's fair preference."

Edward's heart bounded with a sudden emotion as the doctor spoke.

"I am not ignorant of your meaning; nor am I myself without my secret hopes and wishes; but we must not be too sanguine, my good friend," said sir Alfred. "Justice and truth are indeed on our side; but law must be also satisfied ere we can succeed. Since I have determined to assert my rights, I have lost no time in providing legal aid, and legal testimonies. One essential witness, for whose arrival I have anxiously waited, reached England two days ago, and to-morrow he will be in London. Your early friend old Adam Osborn, too, my son, is now in the metropolis."

"Worthy faithful creature!" said Edward. "How must his affectionate heart

have rejoiced to see you! Many times I have beheld him weep at the mention of your name."

"He is not yet apprised of my existence," said sir Alfred. "Only two individuals besides yourselves are at this instant acquainted with my story. The one is the faithful agent of our family, Potts; who, though an old-fashioned attorney, is a trust-worthy man: the other is Erskine, the brilliant ornament of his profession, who, combining with a thorough insight into human nature a perfect knowledge of English jurisprudence, is of all men the best calculated to guide a good cause through the various quicksands, shoals, and rocks, which the bad passions of men, or the necessary barriers of law, oppose to its success. Under his direction we have been secretly proceeding. Adam Osborn is in town at the request of Mr. Potts, who has informed him that an old friend of the family, hearing of the intended sale of the Abbey and its pic-

tures, has commissioned him to purchase them; and, wishing to reinstate Mr. Osborn in his former capacity, has desired to be introduced to him. For such a purpose the old man by easy stages has travelled hither; and to-morrow I am to be introduced to him as a Mr. Hargrave, lately arrived from America, and intending to settle in England. Under this name I at present reside in the house of Mr. Potts, in Chancery Lane; and there to-morrow I expect the arrival of my most important witness, don Antonio de la Torre, who flies on the wings of impatience, for he, like me, seeks the recovery of a long-lost son! I perceive your surprise; but what will be your wonder, when I tell you that the pretended Everard Beauchamp is that very son!"

"Gracious Providence!" exclaimed Edward, to whom the chamber scene which took place on the first night of his arrival in town immediately occurred.

At this moment a servant obtruded to say

that lord Roseville waited the presence of Mr. Montagu in the pavilion. As the door opened, Edward caught a glimpse of a person stealing along the passage, which was too dark for him to discover who it was.

"Did you meet any one in the passage?" said Edward to the servant.

"Yes, sir; the Italian gentleman that came with lady Beauchamp."

"By my fears, Belloni!" exclaimed Edward. "Go: I'll attend his lordship."

The servant retired.

"If Belloni has overheard what I have said," exclaimed sir Alfred, "my life, and yours, my son, are both in danger."

"My father's life in danger! Who then shall separate us?" said Edward.

"Valour will not preserve it, my noble boy, against the daggers of assassins," said sir Alfred.

"What is to be done, then?" said doctor Hoare. "I will immediately expose the

villain: Townsend is in waiting: I'll have him taken into custody this moment."

"Are you mad?" said sir Alfred calmly. "Would you, by the imprudent zeal of a moment, explode a mine that has been so long preparing, ere the enemy is within its influence?—Patience! Patience!—In this blessed land such dangers as I have hinted at are happily so rare, that when they occur they excite a horror almost amounting to madness. From the dangers that I have already escaped, I have learnt the caution necessary to parry off this blow. Be calm, then, and recollect that Providence has revealed to us, by the interruption of the servant, the danger to which our imprudence has exposed us. Our enemy is not aware that we know he has overheard our secret. Thus his measures will be grounded upon our supposed ignorance of his alarms; and if we act cautiously, his base intentions shall be turned to his confusion and our advan-

tage. I therefore will retire: you both watch him and his paramour!"

"But whither do you go, my father?"

"To my solicitor's."

"He has heard you name him, and will discover you," said doctor Hoare.

"Not to-night, surely; and by this time to-morrow, if don Antonio arrive, he will be in custody. Lull but his suspicions till then, and his hour of punishment will overtake the criminal. Now join your party. Go: a moment's delay may excite his suspicion that we saw him. Farewell! Farewell!"

"But where to-morrow shall I see you?" said Edward.

"If you think it prudent, after your observations on Belloni, and can unseen by him come to me, you will find me at my solicitor's. Till then farewell."

The doctor and Edward attended the earl at the supper-table of the prince, where lady

Beauchamp, and sir Everard as he was called, were seated, through the influence of the duchess of Belgrave. Belloni was not visible.

In a few minutes, however, he entered the pavilion. The eyes of Edward were fixed on his. Both their looks bespoke suspicion. Presently Belloni whispered in the ear of lady Beauchamp, and retired.

The feelings of Edward took alarm. He imagined he saw the determined murderer of his father go forth to perpetrate the horrid deed. Lord Roseville had just addressed a question to him on his abrupt retreat from the duchess of Belgrave and lady Emily; but no sooner did Belloni leave the table, than, without one word of reply, Edward rushed out of the pavilion as abruptly as he had done before, to the utter astonishment of the whole party except the doctor.

"What malady has seized that youth to-night?" said the duchess of Belgrave. "Doctor Hoare, are you in the secret? Is

it a new scene of love and madness? I hope we shall hear no report of pistols."

"I *hope* so too," said the doctor with a significant emphasis.

"Seriously speaking," resumed her grace, "I thought the signor and this fiery Montagu exchanged some fierce looks at each other. Is it a duel, doctor?"

"A duel!" echoed lady Roseville, whose humanity took alarm. "Doctor Hoare, your looks do not contradict the suggestion. For God's sake, speak, if you know what this means!"

The doctor, taken by surprise, evaded the question in a manner so ambiguous, that it rather strengthened than refuted the suspicion.

"Oh, good heaven!" exclaimed lady Emily; "will nobody pursue them and prevent it? I am sure there is danger of some kind; and no one has the humanity to go and inquire."

"I trust these are groundless alarms," said the prince; "but they are too interesting and too amiable to be neglected:" and with a gallantry that put the rest of the gentlemen to the blush, his royal highness himself arose. His example was electric. Every gentleman was then ready to rush forth after Edward,—when the most violent shrieks and screams threw the whole company into confusion and dismay.

The cries of "Help! Murder! Help!" soon reached the pavilion; and one messenger after another came out of breath to announce to the earl, that an altercation had taken place between Mr. Montagu and signor Belloni in the hall; that the Italian had plunged a poniard in the breast of Edward; and that he had been prevented from effecting his escape by the police officers in waiting.

The bleeding Edward, at his own request, was now brought into the pavilion.

Lady Emily uttered a loud shriek, and fainted in the arms of her mother.

Doctor Hoare knelt down on one knee, and extended his arms to receive Edward, who faint, pale, and to all appearance dying, just articulated,

"Secure that woman," pointing to lady Beauchamp.

Then turning to the doctor, in a voice scarcely audible he said, "The letter—the letter will explain—give it—to lord Roseville now—at once. Send for my father, at the solicitor's—I feel exhausted.—If I die, tell him my last thoughts were of him—and of one dear, dear object—who, had I lived a little longer——"

He fainted from loss of blood.

A scene of the utmost confusion ensued. The attention of the crowd was divided between Edward, lady Emily, and lady Beauchamp, until the arrival of the surgeon,—when the two former were removed sense-

less to their chambers; and the latter, with her pretended son, sullenly submitted to be the prisoners of the officers of police, who had already in their custody the perpetrator of the horrid deed.

END OF VOL. II.

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